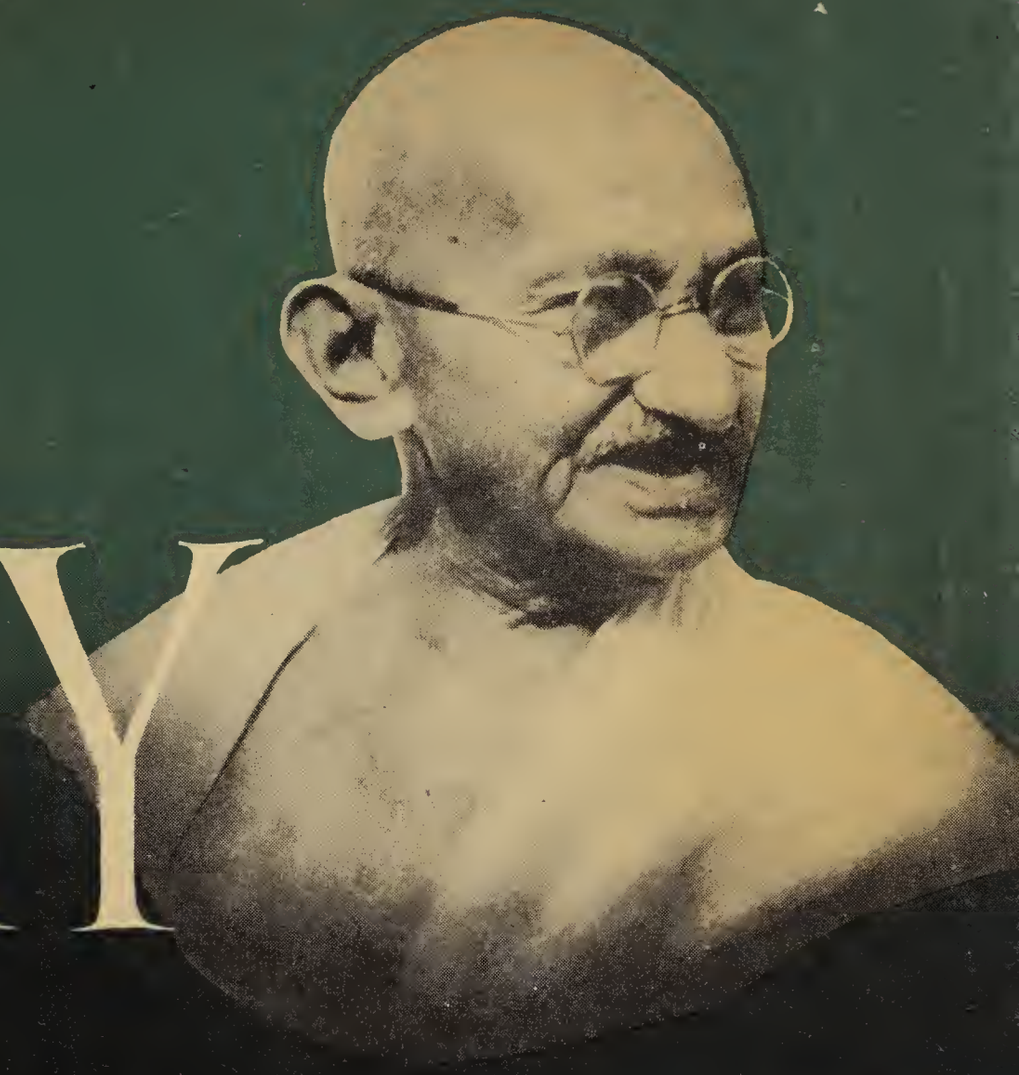
JOHN HAYNES HOLMES



MY GANDHI

A personal portrait of a man who shook the world

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MY GANDHI

JOHN HAYNES HOLMES

As India's Great Soul becomes legend and all but a god, this book by one of Gandhi's first friends in America and lifelong supporter will give him new reality and fill an honored niche in private and public libraries.

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Here is an evaluation also of what Gandhi's life means to our world, written five years after his martyrdom—near

(continued on back flap)

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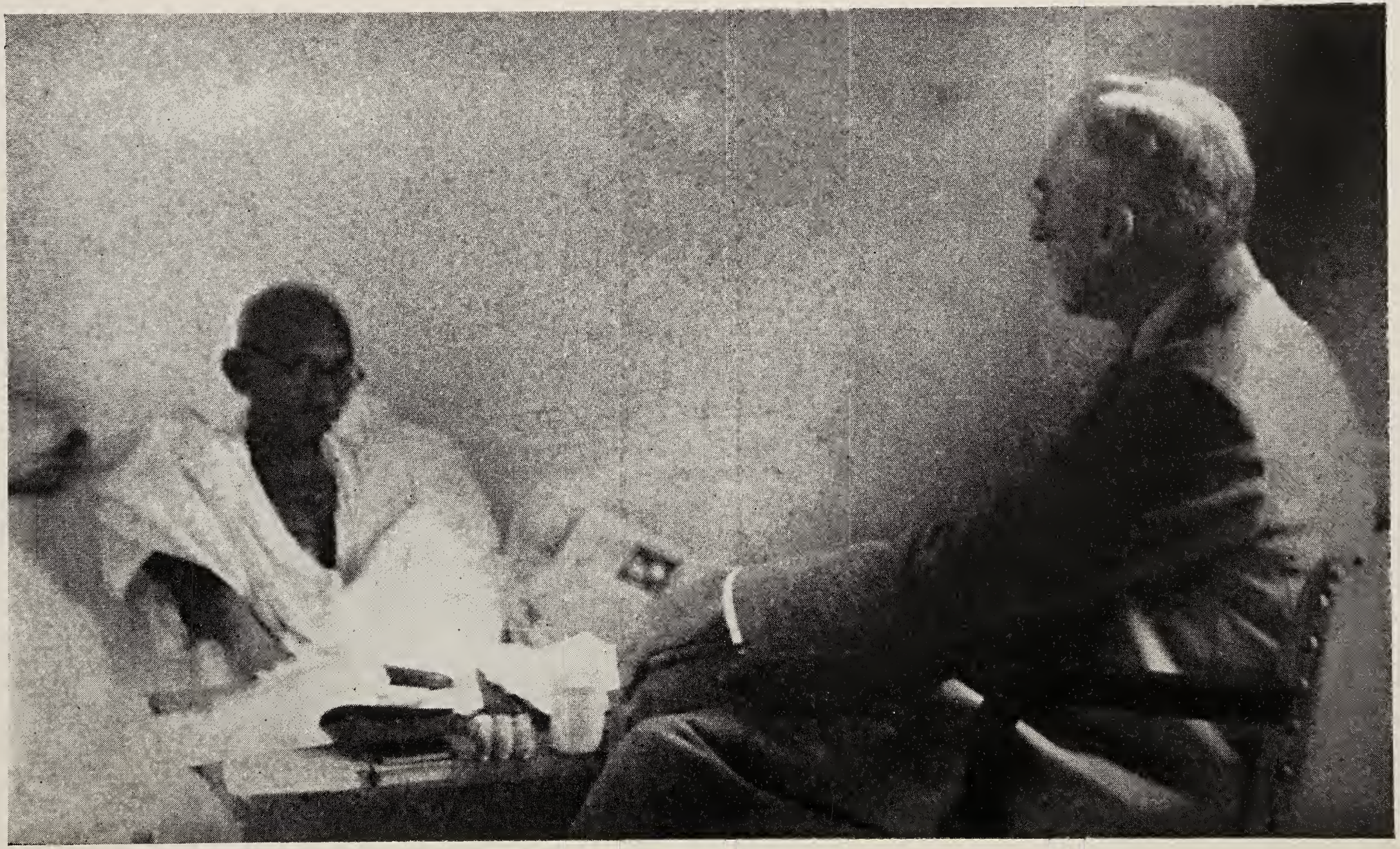

Gandhi with John Haynes Holmes, New Delhi, October 12, 1947.

Photo by the author's son, Roger W. Holmes

MY GANDHI

by

JOHN HAYNES HOLMES

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MY GANDHI

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To

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

Friend and Follower of Gandhi
Greatest and Noblest of Modern Statesmen

I dedicate with reverence
This Book

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. . . In my extremity I turned to Gandhi, and he took me in his arms, and never let me go. Away across the globe he cared for me, and taught me, and reassured me. In London, in 1931, I met him and found him indeed my saint and seer. When I saw him in India, only a few weeks before his assassination, in 1947, he was as wonderful as ever. Had the Mahatma not come into my life, I must sooner or later have been lost. As it was, he saved me. He gave me a peace of mind and a serenity of soul which will be with me to the last. Even when he died, I gave way only for a time. Then the tears flowed with a passion of grief which there was no controlling. But the Mahatma did not fail me. I called to him, and I am persuaded that he answered. My real life as a teacher began with Gandhi, and it ended with his end. I should have retired when he died, for all through these latter months, I have been but an echo of my true self. If I have been content to stay on till now, it is because I could the longer bear witness to Gandhi.

J. H. H. (November 27, 1949)

MY GANDHI

INTRODUCTION

I OFFER no apology for this book, but rather an explanation of its character and meaning. This is indicated at the start by my title, which is borrowed directly from the title of William Dean Howells's famous book, *My Mark Twain*. What Mr. Howells meant to imply by this title was that he was not attempting an ambitious work, a full-length biography of a great man, but offering only a personal confession, so to speak, of his friendship with Twain, and of what this friendship, his own peculiar possession, revealed of the larger aspects of Twain's life. Howells was modest in his claims for a book which covered no wide area of inquiry, but began and ended in the narrow compass of his own experience.

I

It is precisely with this intent and purpose that I have written this book. I was one among a multitude of persons who were blessed with Gandhi's friendship. I corresponded with him on casual occasions, and on two or three of the great crises of his career. I met and talked with him, first, in London in 1931, and again in New Delhi in 1947, thus seeing him against the background of my Western and his Eastern civilization. Through long periods of time and at great distances, I carried Gandhi in my heart, and grew to love him as my own.

All this is too scant to constitute a chapter in the Mahatma's life. But it is a part of the record, and is so set down.

Some will complain that my contact with Gandhi, while pleasant, was none the less quite unimportant. I do not complain at this complaint, as I never tried to make this relationship with the Mahatma important, nor myself important for having had it. But there is an importance which attaches to anything that has to do with a really great man. And there is a duty which imposes itself upon anybody who has touched greatness to share with the world the privilege which he has had. Thus only can the truth be imparted to mankind in its fullness as well as in its detail. Why does the archaeologist cherish a fragment of an ancient statue, and a paleontologist the sliver of a bone from a scattered skeleton, if not because he can reconstruct the whole from this apparently trivial part? In the case of the historian, how many characters on the dramatic scene might have disappeared altogether had it not been for letters, reminiscences, reports and accounts, deliberately set down and saved by humble persons to keep alive and clear, in the true perspective of history, the great among us.

Take Socrates, for example! All that we know about this distinguished Athenian is found in the testimony of his two disciples, Plato and Xenophon, not counting the ribaldry of Aristophanes. Of these twain, Plato is the poet who looks at everything as bathed in the radiance of his own poetic thought. Admiring Socrates profoundly, and knowing him intimately, he uses him in his Dialogues as the mouthpiece of his philosophy. So artfully is this done, and so sincerely, that again and again one feels uncertain as to whether it is Socrates or Plato himself who is speaking. At least three of the

Dialogues—the *Apology,* the *Phaedo,* and the *Crito*—may be regarded as historical documents, and thus authentic. All the rest, including the greatest among them, such as the *Republic* and the *Symposium,* must be looked upon with more or less suspicion as works of the creative imagination. It is just here that Xenophon becomes important. Straightforward, matter-of-fact, prosaic, sturdily honest, intensely realistic, devoted in simple loyalty to his remarkable friend and teacher, Xenophon is in many ways just the opposite of Plato. Of course, there are large areas of agreement between the two men, and where there is disagreement, there seems to be a kind of conciliatory force at work which brings them into accord. But there remain differences of temperament and viewpoint which are final, and make Xenophon invaluable as a corrective of Plato. It is because both of these men wrote as they did about their master that we know him as we do. Even their contradictions and divergencies help to round out the picture.

But think of what we would have known had the other disciples of Socrates followed the example of these two! Here are their names, all set down like the cast of a play—Glaucon, Adeimantus, Cephalus, Polemarchus, Thrasymachus, Cleitophon, Apollodorus, Phaedrus, Agathon, Pausanias, Eryximachus, Aristophanes, Alcibiades, Hippothales, Lysis, Menexenus, Cebes, and others, among whom Plato lists those "who are mute auditors." A few of these men are remembered in their own right, quite apart from the Dialogues in which they appear. Others are remembered not at all, except as Plato has immortalized them in his writings. Most of them, we may be sure, were quite ordinary, yet they felt the fascination of Socrates's presence, were curious about his philosophy, and sat gratefully, if questioningly,

at his feet. Each of them must have had experiences with Socrates which, however insignificant in themselves, were yet unique, and talks which, for one reason or another, were not known to, or at least remembered by others. All of them had viewpoints and judgments which bore the reflection of their own personalities and were thus unique. Suppose, now, these disciples and followers had taken the pains to set down in writing what they knew and thought about Socrates. Suppose they had written with the care of Xenophon and, within the limits of their own ability, with the insight and inspiration of Plato. Here would have been suddenly a whole library of books on Socrates! Most of these books would perhaps have been of slight value in themselves—none of them to be compared with the Dialogues. But taken together they would have constituted a living memorial to fame and influence, each testimony unique and therefore indispensable for the completion of the whole. As it is, all these are silent. The witness they might have borne to one of the greatest men of all time is nonexistent. When Socrates was dead, his followers scattered. The charmed circle was broken up. What the least of these, as well as the best of them, might have said, has gone with the wind of time. And the tale therefore must forever be incomplete.

The same thing is true of Jesus and our knowledge of him. The Nazarene had twelve disciples who were with him day and night, and knew intimately the habits of his thought and life. Outside of this inner circle, were the Seventy, as they are called—men, and perhaps some women, who were pledged to Jesus' service, and with him, or apart from him, bore witness to his word. Then there must have been casual followers, not included in any of the regular groups, who saw and heard

him afar off. In reading the Gospels, we get the idea of great crowds about the Nazarene, so that we have the right to assume that, first and last, there were a multitude of people who had something to tell of him. Had each one told his story, important or unimportant, we would possess today a great body of testimony which would have made the man of Galilee one of the best-known characters of history. As it is, only one of the disciples, Matthew, has left an account of what he knew of the Master. This has come to us at second or third hand, and is thus no first-rate work of history. Mark represents the Petrine tradition, and Luke the Pauline. The unique author of John puts forth a Neo-Platonic interpretation of the Gospel. Beyond this there is nothing. Jesus remains to this day a figure shadowy and dim, and therefore controversial.

What have we not lost by the reticence of those who, in one way or another, knew Jesus, or at least had seen him and heard him! Of course, there was excuse—the confident expectation, for example, of the return of the Son of Man and the instant end of the world. Why set down what could only be swallowed up by the final cataclysm? But by the time this hope had faded away, and the early Christians settled down to the unfolding years, those who remembered the Nazarene and cherished some particular recollections which were their own had died. The void they left could only be filled by more or less imaginative statements of Jesus's life and teaching, which were largely legend or pure mythology on the one hand, and speculative dogma on the other. Alas, it was too late! The testimony which might have been recorded had vanished forever, and Jesus thus obscured in the shifting mists of conjecture and surmise.

II

That nothing of this kind shall happen in our time, in the case of Gandhi, seems now to be the high resolve of all who knew him in the flesh. Thus, I have the word of Pyarelal Nayyar, Gandhi's secretary through these last years following the death of Mahadev Desai, that he is working on a biography of the Mahatma which is planned to be the complete and therefore definitive work on the subject. Meanwhile, Louis Fischer has published his biography, which is as sound in judgment as it is sympathetic in feeling. And from Indian publishing houses these days comes a swelling stream of books and pamphlets, a veritable flood let loose upon the world by admirers and friends. Most of them are prompted by personal recollections of experience with Gandhi. It would seem as though everybody who had ever walked and talked with him, or even seen him from afar, were rushing into print to tell his little tale. This I count all to the good! For the mass of both weighty and trivial material, when gathered together, falls into and composes such a portrait of the man as makes him, in very truth, to live again. It is like the story of the pilgrims who brought each his pebble, to be cast as a token offering upon the shrine of their master, until slowly there loomed a monument rearing its lofty head, to be seen of all afar and near. In the case of Gandhi, we may be sure, there will be no uncertainty as to his lineaments and habits, and the myriad details of his career. Thanks to these multifarious testimonials, the Mahatma will be intimately known to the very end of time.

What is possible, and what has actually happened, is shown in the case of Abraham Lincoln, the slightest details of whose life are familiar, thanks to the testimony

of hundreds of persons, important and unimportant, who have told, and thus placed upon the record, all that they chance to know. Equally impressive is the instance of Sir Walter Scott, who is better known, perhaps, than any other British author, with the single exception of Dr. Johnson. Seeking to explain this fact, a biographer of Scott, Una Pope-Hennessey, lists in her biography the overflowing number of friends, or mere chance acquaintances, who printed books and pamphlets, after the death of Scott, to tell the little or much they knew of the Laird of Abbotsford. "Some of these contemporaries," she writes, "give a great deal of information, others record a single meeting, a gesture, a joke." But they are all valuable in contributing to the whole picture. If we know Sir Walter Scott so well, it is because this multitude of witnesses have recorded each his bit.

It is in this spirit, and with this purpose in mind, that I have written this little book. I could not rest content until I had added my voice to the great choir of voices lifted full and clear in Gandhi's praise. It will be rightly said that my voice is a feeble one—all but lost in the sweet accord of elegaic sound. Thus, my personal experience with the Mahatma, as compared with that of many other men, was meager in the extreme. I met with him on only two widely separated occasions, and under circumstances of no especial moment. My story might be never told, and the world suffer no conscious loss. But I repeat that every contact with a really great person itself becomes important, and should be carefully recorded. Furthermore, I insist that the most petty episode, when attached to genius, and thus illumined with the white light of truth, begins to expand and lift itself unto the full measure of greatness, and therewith become an open door into the precincts of the soul. Constantly,

in the writing of these pages, I had the experience of setting down some little story of meeting and talking with Gandhi, only to find myself caught up, as it were, by an invisible hand, and led to some exalted level of thought where dwelt the Mahatma as the supreme figure of mankind in our time. Gandhi's sublime qualities were present wherever one touched him, and under the slightest provocation became manifest.

III

So here is "my Gandhi"! I have kept closely to my theme. All that I have told in this book had its beginning in my own experience with the Mahatma. If it did not end there, but mounted of itself to far pinnacles of being, it is because my theme was Gandhi, who knew no bounds or barriers to the spirit. To know him at all was to know all of him. It was the dream of William Blake fulfilled:

> To see a World in a Grain of Sand
> And a Heaven in a Wild Flower,
> Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand
> And Eternity in an hour.

CHAPTER I

I DISCOVER GANDHI

I

On a certain day in 1918, I went to the New York Public Library to read an article in the current issue of the *Hibbert Journal* (January, 1918, volume XVI, No. 2, page 191), which had been commended to my attention. The article in question was by Sir Gilbert Murray, on the subject, "The Soul As It Is, and How to Deal with It." It was in substance a study of conscientious objection in wartime, especially as dramatized in the person of the English Quaker, Stephen Hobhouse. But right along with Hobhouse appeared a reference to an Indian by the name of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, of whom I had never until this moment heard. Professor Murray did not seem to know any too much about the man either. "I am told," he wrote, "that Gandhi's influence in India is now enormous, almost equal to that of his friend, the late Mr. Gokhale." But in the space of two pages he told the epic saga of Gandhi's nonviolent campaign in South Africa through two decades (1893-1914) against the white man's government and on behalf of his downtrodden fellow countrymen, the dark-skinned coolies, and this was enough to identify the Indian leader as a heroic, and incidentally successful, practitioner of spiritual force as contrasted with physical or armed force. Murray saw the likeness of Gandhi to Stephen Hobhouse in his reliance upon the soul as the

supreme instance of the adaptation of means to ends. Such men are dangerous to any existing *status quo*, and to all injustice and tyranny. Moved by Gandhi's exploits in South Africa, Murray wrote in comment upon the significance of this Indian:

> Persons in power should be very careful how they deal with a man who cares nothing for sensual pleasure, nothing for riches, nothing for comfort or praise or promotion, but is simply determined to do what he believes to be right. He is a dangerous and uncomfortable enemy—because his body, which you can always conquer, gives you so little purchase upon his soul.

II

My eagerness to see Professor Murray's article sprang from my experiences as a pacifist in World War I. Like most people, I was completely unprepared in 1914 for this wild outbreak of violence and hate. There was, to be sure, the ominous rivalry between Britain and Germany for markets, naval power, and prestige, which finally erupted into the vast imperialistic struggle of 1914. That should have warned us of war! On the other hand, however, was the balance of power between the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente which was strangely regarded as an influence making for the maintenance of peace through Hague Conferences and the World Court. We can now see that these latter forces, initiated by Tsar Nicholas II, despot of despots, were a mere scratching of the surface as compared with the seething contentions raging between the British and German empires. A great civilization, like the Persian, Greek, Roman, and other civilizations before it, was preparing to explode and rend the world to ruin. But I was a member of a generation which believed in progress as

a universal and immutable law binding mankind to the sure fulfillment of its best hopes and dreams. As Calvinism had taught that man was foreordained to be damned, whether he would or no, so evolution in our time had taught that man was foreordained to be saved, whether he would or no. Under the benign influence of this thought, which postulated that progress was as inescapable as gravitation, I had actually brought myself to the conviction that there would never be another conflict of arms between the nations. Nor was I the only one to be thus deceived! People generally, at the turn of the century, were reasonably sure that war was on its way out. It only needed for the Hague Court to gather strength, for programs of disarmament to be achieved, for education to do its blessed work, for diplomacy and statesmanship to become civilized! The problems of the future would be peace problems, to be settled as surely and completely as we were at last now settling the problems implicit in "the purple testament of bleeding war."

This is the reason why I was so confounded by the outbreak of World War I. What happened was a vast experience of disillusionment. A whole philosophy of life had collapsed as suddenly and disastrously as the system of international relations in which we had put our trust. I would have been moved to cynicism and despair, as well as to bewilderment, had I not realized that my deception was induced not so much by the world's betrayal as by my own innate innocence and ignorance. I had betrayed myself and thus been self-deceived. I had never thought through this monstrous problem of war—never once faced up to the devious questions involved in the centuries-old phenomenon of strife and death upon the field of battle. In the foreground, now, was this stupendous conflict which I soon convinced myself was not

in any sense an idealistic struggle, but rather a sordid contention of modern empires, like those of ancient empires, for world mastery and dominion. It was easy enough to find one's position in this event. At least it should have been easy! But in the deep background was the question of war itself. Under what conditions, if any, was war justifiable? What were the differences between a justifiable and an unjustifiable war? How may one feel sure of a defensive as contrasted with an aggressive war? Can a conspicuously bad means, as a resort to arms, serve and save the interests of any good end? Is there a moral question involved in the use of force by nations and by men? What is the judgment of ethics on war? How can war be reconciled, on any terms, with religion?

Into this complexity I plunged, with an uncertainty in my heart which was akin to terror.

First, I turned back to Jesus and the early Christians to get their ideas of war—especially to find if they repudiated war completely, and thus the use, even for defensive purposes, of force and violence. Then I took up the study of the pacifist sects of Christianity, especially of the Friends, who are sane as well as idealistic, and exercise an influence and beneficent power altogether out of proportion to their numbers. Suddenly there came upon the scene the great French novelist, Romain Rolland, and his great book, *Above the Battle,* in which he stated his refusal to support a war which promised to plunge the light of Europe into darkness, and to supplant civilization with a new and dreadful barbarism. Rolland remained to his last day a friend and comforter. From him it was easy to move to Tolstoi, who appealed to religion, as Romain Rolland to culture, to make an end to war as foe to every higher interest and

nobler ideal of man's life. There was here no reconciliation possible. By 1915 I was preaching sermons to my congregation on nonresistance as a true principle of Christianity. In 1916 I published my book, *New Wars for Old*, in which I denounced all war, and offered in its place "the moral equivalent," as William James called it, of the humane struggle for truth and right. In April, 1917, when Woodrow Wilson took this country into the fight of England and Germany for world supremacy, I was ready to take my stand. I could not support this war, I said, which was so plainly a violation of every principle of my religion. If this meant deserting America in the hour of her extremity, then by this very token was I the more faithful to God. In any case, I could not and would not "present arms" even at the command of my government, but must remain steadfast to the all-encompassing law of love. This position I maintained until the end of the war. It was impossible, for me at least, to do otherwise.

But the end of the war saw no end to my perturbation. I pondered the price I had paid for my pacifism. Was such a price necessary? The loss of friends and comrades, my isolation from public life, my sacrifice of influence and leadership, the sheer ineffectiveness of what I had tried to do, the stress and strain upon the very fibers of my being—were these things my fate or my folly? To be sure, there was my congregation which, in the midst of whatsoever differences of opinion, never failed me. Then there were the pacifists, a brave and noble group of persons, who had brought me infinitely precious associations. The humiliations we had endured, the hostilities and persecution which had been directed against us, the perils of our position in the midst of war, these had but served to bring us the more closely together and to reveal

within our souls the hidden depths of the spirit. But were we right in our convictions? Were we not arrogant in our contention that the great masses of mankind were wrong? In any case, right or wrong, what had we done to justify our faith, and thus make pacifism an effective agency for ending war and bringing in the day of peace? So with tortured mind and troubled heart, I continued my studies, and maintained my pacifist position. Already there seemed to be another international conflict on the way. The abomination of the Versailles Treaty, the subjection of the League of Nations to imperialistic ends and aims, the old diplomacy behind the scenes, the helplessness of the people in their bondage to arms, the tragedy of little attempted and nothing done, these forces were driving us steadily toward a second war. What could we do now to prevent it; or, if it came, what could we do to end it? Had we not missed something, some final wisdom, some perfect sacrifice, some supreme guidance of statesmanship, that these questions had still to be asked?

It was amid this growing confusion and dismay that there emerged from my mind that *Hibbert Journal* article, especially in its Gandhi section, which I had read at just the critical moment when America had entered and was fighting the Great War. Its recollection sprang out of my dire personal need. It had lain dormant, like a scattered seed, all these months gone by. It was now quickened again by my receiving, at just this moment, and more or less fortuitously, a little paper-covered pamphlet, somewhat the worse for wear, containing some addresses and letters by M. K. Gandhi, of India. Instantly I seemed to be alive—my vision clear, my mind at peace, my heart reassured. Here was the perfect answer to all my problems. I ran back to the library, and

read again Professor Murray's article. Instantly something clicked within me, like the turning of a lock. Before I knew it, the supreme moment of my life had come.

III

In his great book, *The Discovery of India,* Jawaharlal Nehru describes the plight of his country, at the turn of the century, in her fight against the British Empire. Everything, for some strange reason, had suddenly gone wrong. The leaders of India were distraught, the people frightened and discouraged. The whole movement for national independence had fallen to pieces. Britain was everywhere triumphant. "Then came Gandhi," writes Nehru, and instantly the scene was changed! Gandhi, he says, "was like a powerful current of fresh air that made us stretch ourselves and take deep breaths, like a beam of light that pierced the darkness and removed the scales from our eyes, like a whirlwind that upset many things, but most of all the working of people's minds."

It was in this same way that Gandhi came into my life. At the moment I most needed him, I discovered that there was such a man. He was living in the faith that I had sought. He was making it work and proving it right. He was everything I believed but hardly dared to hope. He was a dream come true.

I have already stated that, so far as I can remember, I had never in my life up to that time heard Gandhi's name. But here it was, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, spread like a banner on Gilbert Murray's pages in the *Hibbert Journal.* I know I had never heard the story of the exploits of this extraordinary man in the rebellion of his fellow countrymen in South Africa, which he had so patiently and bravely led against the prejudice of the people and the oppression of the government. But here

was the outline of it in a few vivid words set down in Professor Murray's article on conscientious objection to participation in war. Gandhi! Why did I not know this name? *Gandhi!* Who was this man, and what did he look like? GANDHI! How had he gotten into South Africa? How had he organized his nonviolent resistance campaign against the inequity and injustice which ground the coolie Indians into the dust of the white man's rule? Above all, by what miracle had this one man sustained the fight for twenty years, without violence or bloodshed, and at last carried it through to victory? There was little in what Professor Murray had written to satisfy my curiosity. But this little was quite enough to prod me wide awake, and to shake me, like a midnight earthquake, to the very foundations of my being. I lived the experience of John Keats when he first read Chapman's Homer, and wrote his immortal confession,

> Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
> When a new planet swims into his ken.

I knew the rapture of Mme. Curie when she went with her husband, on a certain night, to the laboratory where they had so long and patiently been working together, and saw in the darkness that steady glow of light which told her that the mystery of radium had been uncovered. Mine was in its humble way the feeling of Columbus on that October morning when from the deck of his little caravel he gazed upon San Salvador.

I left the library that afternoon in a daze of wonder and excitement. I must learn about this man whom I had so unexpectedly discovered. I must get information to dispel my ignorance. But my quest proved to be difficult. People in general and scholars in particular seemed to know as little about this Indian in South Africa as I did.

For Gandhi had not broken into the magic circle of the public press. He had not yet attracted the attention of journalists who hold the key to the closed door of contemporary knowledge. There was material, of course, published in South Africa, but this was mostly inaccessible in America. Not until I went to England in 1922 did I lay hold on some of this material, and have the great good fortune to meet Mr. Henry S. L. Polak, early associate of Gandhi, who was the first to write of him. My search, however, proved to be mostly an experience of frustration. But all the while, in my early bafflement and occasional despair, I felt within me the ever-deepening conviction that I was on the right track. This Gandhi was a great and wonderful man. Where was there anybody to match him in our troubled and wicked world? Did he not hold in his heart the secret of man's deliverance from the evils, mostly of man's own choosing, which were now besetting him and threatening to destroy him? Must he not be proclaimed at once as a world leader, the compeer of the greatest men of our own or any other time?

The more I thought of it, the more this conviction grew upon me. It was under its impress—an intuition of the soul rather than any persuasion of the mind—that I climbed tremulously into my pulpit on Sunday morning, April 10, 1921, to preach to my people on the subject, "Who Is the Greatest Man in the World?" and to answer my own question, M. K. Gandhi, of India. The audacity of this declaration, in the light of what was known, and not known, at that time about Gandhi here in our western world, seems now incredible. A great audience had gathered, for the subject of my discourse was a riddle which titillated the public imagination. Interest was keen, as the war had brought many men to the conspicu-

ous attention of mankind, and people wanted to know which one I would choose to be supreme. But all was confusion when I named Gandhi, for few had ever heard of this Indian, knew even that he was an Indian, and fewer still knew anything about his career. This confusion is the explanation of the fact that my sermon did not carry very far in the public prints. Newspapers are not expected to present dictionaries and encyclopedias with their news reports. But by some strange miracle of fortune, the sermon found its way to India—first, the story that I had declared Gandhi to be "the greatest man in the world," and later the full text of what I had said to justify this judgment. This was widely published, even in the native press, and everywhere stirred interest and acclaim. The Indians knew Gandhi, and already reverenced him. And here was evidence that the West was discovering him, and recognizing and welcoming his work for the liberation of his people. Everything that has happened since that date, now over thirty years ago, every word spoken and deed done by Gandhi, his life, his death, the applause of men, all have conspired, as it were, to confirm my original pronouncement. And today the whole world accepts all that I dared, at that early hour, to declare. Nay more, far more! For Gandhi is today listed among the immortals. His people name him with Buddha, and so enroll him in the pantheon of the spirit.

The horror that seized the human heart at Gandhi's assassination, the mourning that bound the race in one universal accord of sorrow, the single voice of acclaim that sent *ave atque vale* echoing to the farthest horizons of the earth—these mark the culmination at the end of what was manifest in the beginning.

It comforts me, in the lingering shadow of Gandhi's

departure, to remember what I said in the days (1921) when to our world the Mahatma was still unknown. After giving a sketch of his career in my April 10 sermon, I continued:

> Such is Mahatma Gandhi. In this great spirit he lives among his people. As he moves from city to city, crowds of thirty and even fifty thousand people assemble to hear his words. As he pauses for the night in a village, or in the open countryside, great throngs come to him as to a holy shrine. He would seem to be what the Indians regard him—the perfect and universal man. In his personal character, he is simple and undefiled. In his political endeavors, he is as stern a realist as Lenin . . . at the same time is he an idealist, living ever in the pure radiance of the spirit. . . . When I think of Gandhi, I think of Jesus. He lives his life; he speaks his word; he suffers, strives, and will some day nobly die, for his kingdom upon earth.
>
> Do you recall how it is told of Jesus, that one day, as he was journeying he heard his disciples quarreling. And he said, "What were you reasoning on the way?" And they said they had disputed who was the greatest among them. And Jesus said, "If any man would be first among you, let him be the servant of all."

IV

As I ponder my experience with Gandhi, I can see that my discovery of him to my own consciousness represented a kind of compound of reaction. In summary, the elements involved were three in number:

First, there was the world, our Western imperialist society, staggering like a sorely wounded animal to keep its feet and find its way.

Secondly, there was my inward spiritual need. Despair

and fear possessed my heart after World War I. I had found, or had seemed to find, the nonresistant principle as the central core of religious faith, and, under its influence and guidance, had opposed and refused to participate in the war. But what assurance was there that I had not been deceived? Was my conviction of truth as clear and certain as I thought it was?

Lastly, there was Gandhi, whose mere presence in the world seemed to answer my every question. It was true that, in that early day, more than thirty years ago, I knew little of him. But as the paleontologist, of whom I have spoken, can construct an ancient skeleton from a single bone, so it seemed to me that I could construct Gandhi's spirit and very life from the few items of knowledge I had found. The same was true of Gandhi's thought, which was by no means unique. He himself, with a charming humility, has named the books which fashioned his inner being—the Sermon on the Mount, John Ruskin's *Unto This Last,* Henry David Thoreau's *Civil Disobedience,* Leo Tolstoi's *Kingdom of God,* and above all the sacred testament of his own Hindu faith, the *Bhagavad-Gita.* But his possession and use of this creative material worked in it a transformation of quality which made it transcendently his own. What I felt in the beginning was what I found in the end—that in Gandhi there was

> A presence that disturbs (us) with the joy
> Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
> Of something far more deeply interfused . . .
> A motion and a spirit that impels
> All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
> And rolls through all things.

In Gandhi there were an inward gentleness and calm, a basic wisdom, combined with an outward power of

resolution and command, which made him the supreme spiritual leader of his age. Gandhi was at once a saint, a seer, and a statesman. He was a moral as well as political figure, and over his fellow men he wielded a power which could emerge only from the deepest roots of character. I know of nothing more remarkable than the quiet calm and humble simplicity, the unpretentious serenity, of Gandhi's personality, coupled with the unchallenged authority imposed upon vast multitudes of men by the sheer greatness of his spirit. Here were elements which in another man would have torn him in an agony of conflict, but in Gandhi were resolved into a combination of qualities which in their fusion worked miracles.

All this I felt when first I found Gandhi. All this I confirmed as passed the years which bound him close and ever closer to my heart. The drama of this experience of discovery was terrific. Here was our world rent to ruin by mad resort to force and violence. Out of this vast convulsion there emerged this single man who put all his trust in truth and love. While the world gave itself over to self-destruction, Gandhi found the way of life and triumphantly walked therein. History has known nothing like it since Christ and Caesar.

CHAPTER II

I MEET GANDHI

I

IT WAS SATURDAY, the 12th of September, 1931—a cold, rainy, and dismal day. I was in London, to meet Gandhi. "Charlie" Andrews, beloved of Gandhi through many years, had sent me word that the Mahatma was landing that very morning at Folkestone, and would I come and join the little group of friends who would be there on the pier to meet and greet him on his arrival. Gandhi's mission in England, as all the world knew, was to attend the impending sessions of the famous Round Table Conference on Indian affairs.

I had first heard of all this in Switzerland, where I was touring. In an idle moment at the hotel in Constance, I had picked up a newspaper, and there was a dispatch from Bombay, telling of Gandhi's embarkation and his start on his long journey to the West. Instantly I abandoned all my plans for further travel on the continent, and made my way to London to see the distinguished visitor. With him were his son, Devadas, his devout disciple and servant, the former English lady, Mirabehn (Madeleine Slade), his secretary and selfless friend, Mahadev Desai, another secretary and close companion, Pyarelal Nayyar, Mme. Sarojini Naidu, poet and orator, greatest of Indian women, and others less important or less known. Most of them were my friends—but friends I had never seen! Surely, I must not miss this opportu-

nity so unexpectedly laid before me, and would be pardoned for my importunity.

Yet was I appalled at the spectacle of my own audacity in seeking intrusion upon so important, even historic, an occasion. Undoubtedly the affair was official, and therefore in the hands of government which would have no interest in me and my purely personal desires. Distinguished Englishmen and Indians would be waiting in line to see and confer with the Mahatma. At such a time, and under such conditions, would he not be troubled by my unheralded appearance and my insistent expectation of an interview? I was frightened at the mere possibility of bothering him, or of adding by so much as a feather's weight to the burden he was carrying in one of the supreme ordeals of his career. All my life I have instinctively shrunk from imposing myself upon famous and therefore busy men. How many times I have missed the excitement of meeting great personalities because of my reluctance to grasp and seize, for my own satisfaction, some portion of their meager stores of time and strength. What is it, after all, but sheer impudence to demand attention and therewith interrupt important work or break an irrevocable course of thought? Recall Coleridge and the man from Porlock! No, our business is to protect the great, and not to exploit them for our personal advantage. Yet in this case I clung to the hope, persuaded myself to the conviction, that trespass would be forgiven. Here was Andrews's invitation to come along. Then there was my long relationship with Gandhi in correspondence, which was not voluminous, I may say, since I was as loath to distract the Mahatma with my letters as with my presence, but was invariably on his part kind, cordial, and deeply personal. Very pertinent was a letter written to me in the early summer in which he spoke of the

possibility of his journey, and of his hope of seeing me on his arrival in England. Such a letter could surely serve as a spiritual passport at Gandhi's door. Finally, there was the announcement, which had instantly attracted my attention, that the guest from India was to reside during his stay in London, not at St. James's Palace, as the government had planned, but at Muriel Lester's settlement, Kingsley Hall, in the far East End of the city. In the simplicities and informalities of this house, I would surely be received in ways unknown to a royal residence. As a matter of fact, when I reached London, the first thing I did was to hunt out Miss Lester, and state my case. "I will be a busboy," I said, "a dishwasher, a garbage man, if only you will let me in to see and talk with Gandhi." Miss Lester was wholly sympathetic, bless her heart! She not only gave me entrance, but managed, in kind and clever ways, to bring the Mahatma and me together. So I hoped I was not overreaching myself, nor exacting attention to which I was not entitled.

II

I went down to Folkestone with Reginald Reynolds, a handsome and ardent young Englishman, a Quaker, who had been useful to Gandhi in India. We were not surprised to learn, on our arrival, that the Channel steamer was late owing to the fog and rain. As time went on, I became chilled to the bone, so cold it was without, and so excited was I within. I began to pace the pier in sheer impatience. Suddenly I found myself talking with a young policeman, posted as a guard for the Mahatma. He was an intelligent man, a college graduate, who recognized me quickly as an American.

"You're at an interesting point on the English coast," he said. "Do you see that projection of land over there,

just to the north? That's where Caesar landed when he brought his legions to conquer England." He paused, as though to let me ponder this striking episode of history. Then, pointing in the opposite direction, to the south, he continued, "And through that fog there, not so far away, is Pevensey, where landed a second conqueror, the great William of Normandy." Then suddenly, as I gazed upon the sea, there came a moment of inspiration. "Here is a third conqueror," I cried within my heart, in expectation of Gandhi's arrival. A very different kind of conqueror, to be sure! He had no armor on his back, no sword at his side. He was accompanied not by a Roman legion or a Norman army, but only by a few scattered secretaries and friends. There was something almost grotesque in Gandhi's appearance later on, as he disembarked, and went splashing up the rain-soaked pier toward the train which was to carry him to London. On one of Britain's rawest days, Gandhi was naked to the thighs, his feet covered only by crude and well-worn sandals. His body was loosely wrapped in a loin cloth and *khaddar* shawl. Over his head was an umbrella, carried by some solicitous person who sought, however desperately, to protect him from the pouring rain. Around and behind him were the members of his entourage, a fluttery flock not knowing just where they were going, or what was likely at any moment to happen. This man a conqueror? The idea seemed completely ludicrous. Yet in the next sixteen years he had defeated England, without violence or bloodshed, and India was free. If there is any parallel in history to this amazing achievement, I do not chance to know what it is.

I wiped the rain from my glasses, and gazed out through the mist to the stormy Channel. Suddenly there appeared a steamer, a little craft in white, emerging from

the fog-bound horizon like a sheeted ghost. As she was made fast to the pier, only one man, the official representative of the British Government, was allowed on board. All the rest of us, a shivering and forlorn company, Gandhi's friends, delegates from India, newspaper reporters and photographers, were left standing in the rain, with a great crowd of sightseers behind the barriers. But the delay was brief. In a few moments, which seemed like hours, we were aboard the ship, and I was standing at the door of Gandhi's cabin, awaiting my turn to be received. It was here I had my first glimpse of the Mahatma.

He was sitting cross-legged upon his berth, engaged in earnest conversation with Reginald Reynolds, who was a member of the Quaker group which had been appointed to welcome Gandhi in the name of the English Friends. His head and shoulders were bent forward in a listening attitude, so that I could not see his face. A naked arm, long and lean and wiry, reached out of the shawl, flung lightly about his shoulders, and took a paper from Reginald's hand. There was a quick interchange of words, a flitting smile, and the conference was over.

It was now my turn. I stepped into the little cabin. When Gandhi saw me, he jumped to his feet and, with the lithe quick step of a schoolboy, came forward to greet me. I cannot now seem to remember whether or not he gave me the familiar Hindu salutation. But I felt his hands take mine with a grasp as firm as that of an athlete.

"I wish you might have met me at Marseilles," he said, referring to his landing at the French port, and taking a train north to the Channel and Folkestone.

I replied that I was afraid that I would be in the way —that I was always reluctant to intrude upon busy and

important people. Whereupon he smiled at me gently, and invited me to be with him in London. Then the conversation drifted, as conversations have a way of doing on such occasions, to other and more general themes. I do not recall particularly what was said. I was too excited and confused to make note of Gandhi's remarks. But I shall never forget those bright eyes shining through his spectacles, his voice so clear and yet so gentle, his whole presence so simple and yet so strong. We had only a few precious moments together—others were pressing upon us and clamoring for attention. So I withdrew and contented myself with watching this man whose spirit had reached me, years before, across the continents and seas of half the world.

I have often been asked to describe my initial impression of Gandhi. I do not find this question hard to answer. It centered, first of all, in my somewhat amusing recognition of the fact that he looked exactly like the photographs and cartoons that I had seen of him in recent years. In one way, this was inevitable, so distinctive were the characteristics of his personality. In another way, this was remarkable, so difficult was it to get Gandhi before a camera or drawing board. I suppose I have seen hundreds of his pictures, but I find it hard to remember one for which the Mahatma had made a deliberate pose. In an interview with him at New Delhi, on my visit to India in 1947-1948, I was accompanied by my son. I asked if the latter could "snap" us as we talked. Gandhi smiled, said that he was used to these "instruments of torture," and went right on in his conversation with me, as though nothing else were going on at all. Gandhi had no time, least of all any interest, in posing for pictures. So photographs and drawings were, in a very special sense of the word, mere glimpses of a

man in action. And here he was, precisely the man I had seen so many times in the newspaper or on the screen. As I watched the scene in the crowded cabin of the ship, I felt as though I were looking at mute representations of the Mahatma suddenly come to life.

My second and strangely simultaneous impression was of the infinite grace and charm of Gandhi, who, in his physical appearance, was so awkward. Thus, everybody who entered this little room in which we stood, was, in one way or another, under strain, and thus uneasy. The officials present were anxious that there should be no error or mischance in the proceedings of the occasion. Journalists were eager to get their stories, photographers their pictures, each one his own and thus original. Friends were embarrassed by the difficulties of getting at their beloved Mahatma, and paying him the attention and protection which a tired man would welcome. Some few persons, like myself, were frankly frightened—this stupendous personal experience was too much for our equanimity and courage! But all these varied reactions speedily vanished, like the morning mist, before Gandhi's easy grace. What we saw at the start was the physical appearance of one of the world's great figures. But this almost instantly passed into the spiritual presence of a loving and infinitely lovable man. What we felt, in the first few moments, was reverence and awe, but this was immediately caught up and absorbed by his simplicity, innocence, and charm. Gandhi's attitude had all the naturalness and spontaneity of a little child. There was in him and about him not an iota of self-consciousness —no pose, pretentiousness, or pride. In no time at all, Gandhi had us all laughing, as completely at our ease as though we had known one another and him for years. If, in this world of varied personalities, there is a single

man even half as charming, and thus as irresistible, as Gandhi, I have not seen him.

III

In a few moments, we were off the boat and on our way to London. Gandhi was in charge of officials. I traveled in a compartment of the train occupied by Devadas Gandhi, Pyarelal Nayyar, and Mirabehn (Miss Slade). On arrival, we took automobiles and made our way through the mud and the rain to the Friends Meeting House, where a great audience was gathered and waiting patiently to give welcome to the Mahatma and his attendant company. Laurence Housman, brother of the famous poet and scholar, A. E. Housman, and himself an author of rare distinction, incidentally a long-standing champion of a free India, presided over what proved to be a drama in contrasts. Thus, conspicuous among the Indian delegates, sharing with Gandhi the honors of an occasion which promised to be historic, was Madame Sarojini Naidu, the greatest woman of India, and one of the great women of our time. She was a magnificent specimen of womanhood, richly clad in native silk, erect in stature, commanding in mien, a potent and beautiful presence. As she entered the hall and strode to her place, and received the rapturous acclaim of this crowded assemblage of English men and women, one instinctively felt as though we were looking upon a queen.

As Gandhi entered, attention was focused at once upon this extraordinary man. What a contrast between these two! To an intruder, or careless observer, who knew nothing of the Mahatma, nor of the momentous character of the occasion, there might have appeared something almost ridiculous in the picture. Here was this Indian striding into the auditorium with his feet and

legs bare, his middle bound by the loincloth, his torso wrapped and rewrapped against the chilling weather, in the ample folds of his cotton shawl. With utter dignity he crossed the platform and took his seat, and serenely surveyed the audience. As he sat there, calm and motionless as a Buddha, the ridiculous, if ever it appeared in such a presence, straightway diffused and dissolved itself into the sublime. I shall never forget the sense of awe that settled like an atmosphere upon that auditorium. For the first time I understood the mystic secret of Gandhi's influence over the millions of his fellow countrymen. Had a king been present, we could not have felt more reverence. Suddenly I found myself remembering the testimony of Mr. Bernay, an English journalist, who said, "The moment you see Gandhi, you catch the atmosphere of royalty." But it was more than royalty which we saw that day. Not a king but a Mahatma, a "Great Soul," was with us. This man needed nothing of the personality and pageantry of a king to exercise his power. For it was the spirit, not the flesh, which clothed this man in more than majesty.

If we felt this when we looked upon Gandhi, how much more when we heard him speak. There was no formality about this meeting. Mr. Housman opened it with a few appropriate words which were already in every heart. Addressing Gandhi, he said:

> We welcome you, the guest of this nation. We welcome you as bringing something which is not generally understood, the unification of politics and religion. In churches we are all sinners, but in politics every one else is a sinner—that is a correct description of our daily life, and you have come to call upon us to search our hearts and to declare what our religion is. You are a strange man. You are strange to many, even

in your own country. You are stranger to the people in my country. You are so sincere that you make some of us suspicious, and you are so simple that you bewilder some of us.

Gandhi responded to this introduction in words which were gently uttered, in a voice quiet, and almost monotonous. But as they reached our ears, they were as the words of a royal proclamation. He made three points clear. First, his credentials! He came to England, he said, not as an individual, but as the representative of his people. "I represent, without any fear of contradiction, the dumb, semistarved millions of my country, India." Secondly, his mandate! He came not to dicker or to bargain with Britain, but to present the terms of the All-India Congress. "As an agent holding a power of attorney from the Congress," he said, "I shall have my limitations. I have to conduct myself within the four corners of the mandate imposed upon me. . . . If I am loyal to the trust I bear, I must not go outside that mandate." Lastly, his goal! What did the mandate exact? "Freedom," cried Gandhi. "The Congress wants freedom, demands freedom for India and its starving millions." No compromise here, no equivocation, no appeasement! "He spake," however gently, "as one having authority"—and with the voice of prophecy.

IV

This was on a Saturday afternoon. On the succeeding five days of my stay in London, I saw the Mahatma four separate times.

The first time was on the following morning, Sunday, when I went bright and early to Kingsley Hall in the London slums. Gandhi was on an open terrace, high up

above the tenement roofs of the neighborhood, seated cross-legged on a kind of table, and bathed in the warm sunshine of a perfect day. At one end of the terrace was the room, or rather cell, some five feet wide, seven or eight feet deep, with stone floor and bare walls, and furnished only with a table, a chair, and a thin pallet, where Gandhi slept. Talking with him, as I entered, was one of the great leaders in Indian affairs. Within a few moments, all too short for me to prepare properly for my interview with the Mahatma, the conference ended, and Gandhi was beckoning me with extended hands and his ineffable smile of welcome. I came to him and sat down on a rough wooden chair beside him. We talked of the Round Table Conference—was it going to succeed? No, Gandhi saw no reason for believing that it would succeed. His reason told him it must fail. "But God has told me to come to England," he said, very simply, "and he must have his own good purposes. So I have put my judgment aside, and shall trust and hope until the end." I referred to the vicious attacks upon him in certain of the London newspapers, and expressed the hope that they did not trouble him unduly. "No," he said, "they do not trouble me, but they pain me terribly. Think of how fully and freely I have talked to the reporters. I have told them everything. And yet they print these slanderous lies. It hurts me that such things can be done. But," he continued, with a flitting smile, "I do not let them worry me. They do no harm. Nothing can injure truth." I then referred to the next day, Monday, which in India was his day of silence, and asked if he would attend the sessions of the Conference that day. "Oh yes," he replied, with his smile now become almost a laugh. "I shan't say a word, but think of what a chance I shall have to listen." We talked of a few other matters, and

then I arose, with an apology that I had taken his time, for others were waiting to see him, as indeed they always were. I shall never forget the sheer loveliness of his smile as he took my hand and said, "Come whenever you can. You may have to wait, but I want to see you as long as you are in London."

I next saw Gandhi on Sunday night at a religious service to which his friends and a few men and women from the neighborhood were invited. There were perhaps some fifty or sixty persons present in a room which might have held a hundred. The Mahatma sat on the platform, not in a chair but on the floor, cross-legged, wrapped in his voluminous cotton shawl, with some kind of a rug thrown about his limbs. He spoke to us, from his sitting posture, on prayer, or rather his experiences of prayer. He began by stating that he believed in God, and therefore of course prayed. He told us what this practice had done for him. "Without prayer," he said, "I could do nothing." As he went on speaking in his quiet way, telling us of his knowledge of this most intimate discipline of the spiritual life, his voice became very soft and low. I doubt if many persons in the room, back of the front rows where I was sitting, could hear what he was saying. The Mahatma seemed more and more to sink into himself. His address became as it were a process of self-communion, or of communion, right here before our eyes, with One greater than ourselves. But words were not necessary at such an hour. His voice was now become a whisper—a deep awe was in possession of every heart. Gandhi's mere presence was diffusing an atmosphere in the little room, which gripped us in its spell. Then, slowly, Gandhi seemed to come to himself, and was speaking to us again. It was a moment of mystic uplift never to be forgotten.

I did not see Gandhi again until the following Wednesday night, when I sat with him at the door of his terrace room during his supper hour. He was sitting on his pallet bed, on the floor. I squatted down beside him to my vast discomfort—there was no chair! He held in his left hand a cup of goat's milk. On his lap was a tin plate, such as I have seen convicts use in prison. In this plate he was mixing together the more substantial elements of his evening meal. I seemed to see some dates, perhaps some rice. Whatever they were, they filled the tin plate scantily. Gandhi's secretary, Pyarelal, was with us, but did not join in the conversation. We talked of many things—of personal matters, of the Round Table Conference, of the projected interview with Mayor Walker, of New York, then a visitor in London, of Palestine and Zionism and their relationship to the situation in India, and of a possible visit of the Mahatma to America, which was being strenuously urged upon him. At the close, I bade him good-by, for I was leaving on Friday for my country, and expected not to see him again. Immediately he laid aside his cup and plate, from which he seemed to be eating sparingly, and took my hand in his. "We shall meet again," he said, "in India, or in America."

Then came a surprise! On the following afternoon, Thursday, I had gone to the House of Commons, to listen in with some newspapermen on an informal talk which Gandhi had consented to hold with a chosen group of the members. To my surprise I saw Devadas, Gandhi's son, making his way toward me. He had a message! His father had postponed the meeting with the Commons, and was at St. James's Palace, where he wanted to see me, and would wait till I came. I hastened with Devadas to the Palace, and there found the Ma-

hatma in a small side room, eating his supper. He was sitting on a large lounge, or divan, and invited me to sit down beside him. It seemed that a message of invitation to visit America, signed by a long list of names, had just been received and must be answered promptly. Whose were these names; what did they represent; what did I think of the whole proposal? We talked together for perhaps a half hour, as members of Gandhi's party passed in and out of the room, but never intruded upon our conversation. Then, on word that the attendants were waiting to close the Palace for the night, we all arose and started for the automobiles. Gandhi asked me if I would ride with him to Kingsley Hall, so that we might continue our discussion. Of course I accepted this invitation, and snuggled myself in close by the Mahatma, as we sped far eastward to the slum districts of the city. I noted that there was no parade, no elaborate police escort, no blowing of horns and sirens. Gandhi's simple and modest spirit was rigorously respected.

The way was long, but seemed to be short. We talked earnestly about that American problem, which presented difficulties. Suddenly we were at the Hall. And there not only the doorway but the whole street was blocked with a great crowd of men and women, but mostly children. It seemed that the boys and girls of the neighborhood, even the youngsters and babes-in-arms, had become much excited over this strange man from India. He was so queer, and yet so friendly! In the morning they gathered in the street to see him drive away, and in the evening to see him come home again. Some of the older children had discovered his early five o'clock walk for exercise, and were beginning to lie in wait for him, to accompany him and incidentally strive to keep up with his long and rapid strides. This particular evening he was

late, but they were still there, and what a clamor they raised as the Mahatma emerged from his automobile. He paused for a moment—what else could he do with this swarming crowd?—and then turned, and smiled, and waved his hand. The children shouted again, and thronged about him to touch his hands and feel his shawl. I bade him a hasty good-by, as he sought his room and a little rest. And as I went down the street to the tube station, with the children's voices ringing in my ears, I thought of the story of one in Galilee, long ago and far away, who said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God."

V

There are two matters referred to above which perhaps call for explanation and discussion.

One is the reputed interview of Mayor Walker with Gandhi. As this story is usually told, Jimmy had requested the honor of meeting and being received by the Mahatma. The tide of Walker's career had turned and was rapidly running out. Therefore anything that could restore the Mayor's prestige was eagerly sought after. Another and more extravagant version of the affair appears in Gene Fowler's biography of Walker, entitled *Beau James*, where we encounter the grandiose statement that "Gandhi had expressed a desire to meet 'the Mayor of New York!' "* Mr. Fowler declares that Walker had heard this news with "pleasant amazement." Such "amazement," I may say, were the incident true, would all be on the other side. Imagine Gandhi, who confessed on this London visit that he had never heard of Charlie Chaplin, and when the latter asked for an interview,

* *Beau James*, pp. 299-300.

said, No, he had no special interest in actors,* going out of his way, and consuming his precious time, to see Jimmy! Of course, Gandhi never asked to see him at all. There is good evidence that, as in the case of Chaplin, the great Indian had never heard of the American politician. The story, as I chance to know, is quite otherwise.

On Wednesday of the week following Gandhi's arrival, I was loitering in the entranceway of Kingsley Hall. Suddenly there entered Webb Miller, a well-known newspaperman, representative at this time of the United Press. He came right up to me, with a manifest display of excitement. "What do you think," he said. "I'm pulling off a meeting between Gandhi and Jimmy Walker." I was astounded and shocked.

"Does Gandhi know anything of this," I asked.

"No," replied Mr. Miller, "but Jimmy is all set, and I have come to see Gandhi now."

By this time I was in a mood to protest. There was something about the picture of Gandhi and Walker face to face, and the thought of what the newspapers would do with a spectacle of this kind, that outraged me.

"See here," I said to the United Press man, "you can't pull off a thing like this."

"Oh, yes I can," was his confident reply.

"But you mustn't," I continued. "It's an insult to Gandhi to ask him to receive Walker."

"But think of the story," he said. And he turned away, excited and exultant.

I suppose I was exaggerating the significance of this proposal, or rather plot. Walker's light was dimming,

* Later, when told that Chaplin sprang from a poor family in the East End of London, Gandhi relented and received the distinguished artist.

and Gandhi was immune to an experience of this sort. Still, it disgusted, even frightened me. Why did the newspapers resort to such tricks for making news? Was there anything I could or should do to save the Mahatma from this indignity? He would not recognize, least of all understand, what was a deliberate attempt to exploit him for cheap and vulgar ends. Nor could his attendants be expected to be aware of what was going on. In such a situation, was it not my duty to interfere, and thus do my best to forestall disaster?

I had not yet made up my mind to what must be a final decision, when I was summoned to see Gandhi at his evening meal. What should I say to him? Should I raise the question at all? Had Gandhi heard what was being planned and plotted for him? Still pondering the problem, I was frankly relieved when Gandhi himself spoke.

"Do you know Mayor Walker?" he said suddenly, without warning. "He is here in the city," Gandhi continued, "and has asked to see me. What do you think I should do? What do you advise?"

There followed a pause. I watched Gandhi quietly eating his evening meal. He seemed quite unperturbed. Was that a gleam of amusement in his eye as he looked up at me? Had he already been told about the Mayor? Was he testing me out, or playing with me a bit? I hesitated only a moment. After all, it was Gandhi who had now raised the question, and he was entitled to obedience to his law of truth.

"Gandhiji," I said, "I don't like to tell you what I know about Mayor Walker. With your permission, I am not going to tell you anything personal. But there are certain things on the public record which are open to everybody, and which you are entitled therefore to

know. I am acquainted with this record because I helped to write it. The gist of it is that Mr. Walker is a politician of an all too familiar type, who is now under serious charges of misconduct in office, and is pretty certain to be removed. His administration has become a municipal scandal. I should hate to see you in company with the Mayor, and my sober judgment is that you should not receive him. This is an attempt to use you, Gandhiji, and it should not be allowed to succeed. The newspapers would carry the story around the world, and it would do much to repair Walker's badly damaged reputation. To this extent it would embarrass efforts now being made in New York to 'clean house.' Don't let him come!"

I stopped, and waited. Perhaps Gandhi would want to question me a bit. But he didn't seem interested. After a moment's silence, he passed on to something else. I never heard Walker mentioned again. It was a satisfaction to note that he was not received.

The second matter, referred to above, has to do with the question of Gandhi's coming to America after the adjournment of the Round Table Conference. No sooner had he reached London than the invitations began to come in. Some of them were presented personally by Hindus who had rushed across the sea from New York to sit at the feet of their beloved leader. They were earnest and sincere, but many of them quite irresponsible. Others came in messages from friends of Gandhi; both Americans and Indians, who craved the honor of receiving the Mahatma, and counted shrewdly on the prestige which he would bring to movements or interests which they represented. There was at least one, already mentioned, which was signed by more or less influential names, and showed some appreciation at least of the problems involved in such a visit to America as was

proposed for such a man. From the beginning to the end of Gandhi's stay in London, this question was kept alive. It was not silenced until Gandhi returned to India by the eastern rather than the western route.

I heard about these invitations, of course, but said nothing until Gandhi himself broached the subject. When he laid the whole matter before me that evening at St. James's Palace, I felt released and thus free to advise.

From the first, by a sort of inner conviction, I was opposed to the whole proposition. For one thing, it was obvious—or so it seemed to me—that Gandhi's place was in London, and, when the Conference broke up, immediately in India. There was no one to take over his leadership in this hour of continuing crisis. As for America, this country was far removed from the main stream of Indian affairs, and a visit there could only be interpreted as a diversion. If short, it would be unsatisfactory, and thus a disappointment; if long, it would keep the Mahatma absent from the main scene of action, when his presence and influence were needed most. Furthermore, it must be remembered that America in 1931 was by no means that international center which in recent years it has become. Nothing could persuade me that this was the time for a visit to this vast and absorbing country.

Secondly, in prospect of a visit to America, I could see no evidence of preparation for Gandhi's coming. This preparation would have to be of the most precise and elaborate character. There must be a reception committee appointed, an itinerary arranged, speaking engagements fixed, scrupulous care provided for the Mahatma's comfort and safety, an informed and sympathetic press assured, interviews guaranteed with the President and

other leading citizens both public and private. These are some of the things that must be provided! Yet, so far as I could see, no responsible organization was at hand or in prospect to take over as difficult and important a piece of business as the people of this country have ever attempted. These friends of Gandhi in America, from the worthiest possible motives, had just gone ahead with their invitations, and given never a thought to the responsibility involved in bringing to these shores "the greatest man in the world." I had had experience with this sort of thing, some years before, in the visitation of a distinguished Indian who arrived in New York without even a hotel room being secured for his reception, or any guide or protector except his secretary, who was as innocent and ignorant of America as his chief. Never again—never again! Some years later, when corresponding with Gandhi about a possible visit to America, I insisted that a period of not less than six months should be set aside for preparations highly organized and ably directed. Nothing else, in such a circumstance, I said, was safe. Perhaps Gandhi never came because a period of this kind was never found available.

Thirdly, I found myself worrying about the purpose, and probable outcome, of the plan to persuade Gandhi to come to America. Of course, most of the self-appointed hosts across the sea were sincere and guileless. They frankly wanted to see the Mahatma and pay him honor. Incidentally, it was thought by some that it would help Gandhi, in this critical hour, to see democracy at work under the favorable conditions of American life. But all too many of those who wanted Gandhi to cross the Atlantic were more or less designing persons. Consciously, or perhaps unconsciously, they wanted to use Gandhi for selfish purposes. The Indian leader had an

extraordinary pictorial value. He stamped whatever he touched with the indelible impress of his unique personality. Thus was he constantly liable to exploitation. This was the reason why he was so careful about whom he saw and where he went during his stay in England. Thus was he hesitant, while naturally excited, about the idea of going to America. It had been hard even to persuade him to address a radio message to American listeners, and great was his relief when the performance was over. In all this I sympathized with him profoundly, and did all I could to confirm his own inner judgment. To have seen him manhandled to make an American holiday would have been more, I think, than I could have endured.

Finally, there was the question, burning into my mind, as to whether the American people as a whole were ready to receive the Mahatma in true appreciation of his character and work. Not yet, be it remembered, had the great Indian won world recognition and reverence. The independence of India had not crowned his fame, nor the assassination sanctified it. His policies were still regarded as fantastic, and his personality as queer. The Indian people understood him perfectly, and therefore exalted him, but this was because he was one of their own, long tested and tried through years of intimate acquaintanceship. What I dreaded in 1931, in a visit to America, was a vast explosion of vulgar curiosity and ribald jesting. I shrank from the mere possibility of Gandhi's presence, like his pictures in the movies, being greeted by rude laughter. In this I may have been grievously mistaken. I was perhaps ignoring Gandhi's supreme power and influence over men. His simplicity and grace, to say nothing of his courage, were passports to human favor. This was shown, at this very time, by

his visit in England to the Lancashire weavers, who had been all but ruined by his nonco-operation boycott in India of cotton goods imported from England. Here he was rapturously received and applauded. This might have happened in America! But I was not sure of it, especially when time was so short and preparation so scant. I think now, as I thought then, that I was right in disfavoring the whole American proposal. It was only later that I discovered that there were important Indians who were opposed to the idea, and grateful for my support of their position.

VI

I have often wondered at the easy and quiet way in which these questions were settled. Both the request to receive Mayor Walker and the invitations to visit America were, in their very nature, highly controversial, and might have broken out into furious contention. In the case of the Walker conspiracy, Mr. Miller, the United Press representative, must have moved heaven and earth, in so far as he controlled either, to win consent to his dramatic proposal. As a first-class newspaperman, he knew that he had a great idea. His determination to put it through must have been in exact proportion to the story's worth as a journalistic "scoop." But there was no dispute nor even discussion over the matter, not enough at least to stir a ripple in Gandhi's company. The question simply disappeared, like a bit of refuse in the sea. As for the project of going to America, this was more serious. There were invitations to be considered and courteously answered. Distinguished men were involved and loving friends. But this also passed, and "left not a rack behind."

What happened was Gandhi's secret—a profounder

aspect of what he called his "experiments with Truth." When a problem appeared which had to be answered—some personal problem, or some vast riddle of statesmanship—the Mahatma never left the contentious subject to drift aimlessly about until caught and whirled away by some chance current of passing thought. Neither did he cast it, like an apple of discord, into the discussions of his friends and counselors, to be more or less unsatisfactorily settled by some kind of compromise agreement. Nor was he content to think the problem through by some hard process of ratiocination. Such methods, said Gandhi, led to no sure discovery of truth, no disclosure of fundamental principles. Always was there the temptation to weigh arguments and match wits, or, in sheer relief, to yield at last to the loudest voice or the most persistent advocate. What Gandhi did was, first, to listen, to open his mind to anything that anybody had to say. Not to debate or refute, much less amiably agree, but to gather information and points of view! His silent Mondays, the one day in each week when he did not talk, were greatly helpful to this end. Then came the time when discussion and communication ceased. Suddenly Gandhi turned in upon himself, as in the experience of prayer, and into the deeper recesses of his life took the problem to be solved. There, in the realm of conscious thought, he dwelt with it and pondered it. Then, if the problem was difficult or important, he would pass with it into the mystic depths of the subconscious, if necessary into the unconscious. There the forces of the spirit worked upon it, as the digestive juices work upon food admitted to the stomach, and slowly dissolved it, and absorbed it. By a process known only to those who live ultimately in the inner as contrasted with the outer realms of experience, a vexatious problem became a part of his own being, and therewith, in the end, a part of

eternal being. It was as though God spoke, and revealed at last the truth. For the problem was now clear. Gandhi was sure of his answer. He had heard the inner voice—and therewith found the guidance that he sought.

A story is told of an Indian politician who went to Gandhi for counsel. More particularly he wanted the Mahatma's endorsement of a certain policy, which he had convinced himself was necessary to the welfare of his country. Gandhi listened quietly, and took the proposal under advisement, only in the end to announce his rejection of the plan. Having thus spoken his mind, he turned to other matters. But the Indian leader, incidentally a devoted follower of the Mahatma, was not so easily satisfied. On the contrary, he was disappointed, even disgusted, and lifted his voice in protest. "What is one to do," he cried, "when Gandhi insists that his opinions all come from God?"

This is an amusing but superficial comment on an action related directly to the profoundest aspects of Gandhi's being.

Another story of reaction upon Gandhi's spiritual processes comes much nearer the truth. It relates to Badshah Khan, the great Pathan leader, who followed as a devout disciple in the Mahatma's footsteps. "Whenever a question of great pith and moment arises in Gandhiji's life and Gandhiji takes an important decision," remarked Badshah Khan, on a certain occasion, "I instinctively say to myself, 'This is the decision of one who has surrendered himself to God, and God never guideth ill.' " And again, he said, "I have never found it easy to question his decisions, for he refers all his problems to God and always listens to his commands. After all, I have but one standard to measure and that is the measure of one's surrender to God."

It is in this sense that Gandhi must be understood as

primarily and fundamentally a religious being. Almost alone among the great statesmen of history, he spoke and acted from spiritual motives and to spiritual ends. Outwardly one saw only a man rigorously faithful to ideals, but inwardly there was the spectacle of a man seeking to find and to surrender to the mystic promptings of the spirit. For Gandhi innocently and yet profoundly believed in God as the central influence of his life. He perpetually sought God in prayer, and found him as an immediate presence in the heart. There is no hope of understanding Gandhi, much less of interpreting him in thought and act, unless we keep constantly in mind this basic religious aspect of his nature. God represented to Gandhi not so much a presence as a pattern of the soul. It was this pattern which brought order alike to the outer and inner world of reality, and therewith that sense of peace which Gandhi recognized as Truth. It was to confront this Truth that the Mahatma brought his problems great and small—his confusions, perplexities, and dismays. If these brought discord and disorder to the soul, and broke the spell of inner peace, then Gandhi knew that the ideas from which they sprang were fallacious, even flatly false, and must be denounced forthwith. But if they seemed to merge themselves into the divine harmony of his inner life, to fit the framework and match the pattern of the soul and thus strengthen and sustain it like a chord of music underpinning and interpenetrating some soaring melody, then Gandhi knew that these ideas were true. This was what he meant by Truth, and God as the embodiment of Truth.

The result of such conviction, or rather faith, was the absence of controversy in Gandhi's presence, and the settlement of momentous questions with ease and quietude, and with finality. It meant also an irresistible

power of leadership which swept onward as clean and clear as an arrow shot straight to a waiting target. There were those who sneered at Gandhi for using what they called the paraphernalia of religion to clothe his thought and give it the appearance of authority. There were others who accused the Mahatma of arrogance and pride of opinion, as though his sweet simplicity were not always manifest. Hardest to bear was the charge that the Mahatma took the deliberate pose of infallibility, and of thus presenting his ideas and policies as true because he said so. As though Gandhi were not the first to confess his failures to interpret God's purposes aright, and thus his guilt, as he put it on one notable occasion, of "Himalayan errors." These judgments mistake the man. They forget, or ignore, the spirit in which constantly he lived and moved and had his being. Seeing him in his guise as statesman, agitator, popular leader, they miss those inner qualities of insight and dedication which must in the end enroll Gandhi among the supreme religious geniuses of history.

What we have here is humility—"meekness," as the New Testament calls it—of the most exalted and exquisite type. Gandhi lived in God, and sought to know and do his will. Nothing of himself did he allow to intrude upon a relationship in which God was everything and the Mahatma nothing. What he found, or seemed to find, he conveyed to his disciples, and ultimately to the great mass of his fellow countrymen, so that all became one company in God. Hence the inner peace which prevailed in the midst of the most stupendous revolution in history! At last was proved the truth that "the meek shall inherit the earth."

CHAPTER III

THE LIFE OF GANDHI

I

THE LIFE OF A GREAT MAN, as of any man for that matter, is all of a piece. It represents a wholeness, as of a river flowing steadily from its sources to the sea. Yet is it never, at any two moments, the same. The life, like the river, is always moving and therefore changing, now swiftly and serenely sweeping on its way, now leaping and foaming in some overwhelming crisis of affairs, now pouring into some confluence of waters which engulfs the single stream and seems to lose it in the encompassing flood.

A really great life takes on a kind of pattern, woven partly by the force of outward circumstance, and partly by the creative drive of inward thought and feeling. If the pattern is not clear of itself, it is sometimes helpful to divide a man's career into more or less artificial divisions, that its progress and significance may be made more manifest than ever it was to the hero and his compeers. There is inevitably, in the life of any man, an initial period of preparation; sooner or later there comes the mature period of achievement; then the climax, and the slow or swift decline into death. It is in marking off these periods that the true biographer becomes an interpreter of meanings as well as a recorder of facts, and himself determines the fashion of a man.

It is in this spirit that I would suggest that Gandhi's

career, like Caesar's Gaul, divides itself into three parts. Thus, there was first the period of twenty years (1893-1914) in South Africa, where Gandhi found himself and his work in the world. Also, the strange and potent weapon he was to use in the performance of this work! This is the period covered in minute detail by Gandhi's autobiography, *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*. Secondly, there was the earth-shaking *Satyagraha* struggle in India for the deliverance of this mighty nation from British and therefore alien rule (1914-1947). Everything that Gandhi did in South Africa was repeated now in India on a vaster scale and to stupendous ends. Lastly, there was the third period in Gandhi's life, which was entering upon its supreme climax in his struggle in the new India for peace as well as freedom, when it was tragically cut short by assassination (January 30, 1948).

II

Gandhi arrived in South Africa in May, 1893.* He was a young lawyer, twenty-four years of age, educated to his profession in London, practicing it more or less successfully in Bombay; he gave not the slightest indication of the destiny that was awaiting him. He wore a black frock coat, striped trousers, polished shoes; the only Eastern touch was a turban on his head. His business was with a Mohammedan Indian, Dada Abdulla Sheth, to conduct a lawsuit on the latter's behalf and earn a sizable fee. He had left his wife and two children in India, assuming that he would return in not more than

* For this unfamiliar and difficult period of Gandhi's life, as well as for certain later biographical details, I am greatly indebted to Louis Fischer's admirable account in his *The Life of Mahatma Gandhi*.

a year. He was thus alone on a visit to a strange country which lasted, as things turned out, for twenty years. Nobody would have been more surprised than Gandhi had he been able to foresee the changes that his life in South Africa would bring upon him.

Promptly on his arrival at Durban, Gandhi found himself plunged into the midst of the injustices and terrors which are rife in a country beset by race prejudice and the recognition of the color line. Never in India under British rule had he suffered such indignities. Thus, on disembarkment at Durban, he took a train for Pretoria, the capital of the Transvaal. He purchased a first-class ticket for the over-night journey—a thing which he never would have done in later years, when he made it a point always to travel third class, with the common people! At Pietermaritzburg, the capital of Natal, a white man joined Gandhi, and straightway proceeded to make trouble. At the insistence of this man, the railroad officials ordered Gandhi to go to the third-class coaches, and on his refusal, threw him off the train. All that night Gandhi sat in the cold and gloomy waiting room of the station, brooding over the inconvenience and insult which he had been made to endure. Years later, when asked by John R. Mott what had been "the most creative experience" in his life, he named this night in Pietermaritzburg. Here were planted the seeds which flowered and flourished in the revolution in India for independence. Here was born the man who later shook the world.

But Gandhi's trials were not over. On the trip to Pretoria, he had to travel from Charlestown to Johannesburg by coach. Here was repeated the humiliating experience on the train, only in this case some right-minded white passengers interfered, and Gandhi was allowed

to proceed. Of course, he had the usual hotel and restaurant difficulties. Already, when his lawsuit was scarcely begun, he looked forward eagerly to its completion, and his early return to India. Meanwhile, what could he do to help his long-suffering fellow Indians, many of them coolies, who so desperately needed succor? Here was another decisive crisis in his career.

It is to be remembered that the Indians, in the various states of South Africa, constituted small minority groups of men and women, well-nigh lost in the swarming multitudes of natives on the one hand, and the dominant minority of whites on the other. Most of the Indians were low caste, and came from India in the beginning as contract laborers or serfs. Bound to service for five years on the land, they were free, at the end of this period, to return to India, passage paid, or to remain in South Africa as free laborers. But as time went on, conditions worsened. Thus, in Natal, when Gandhi arrived upon the scene, the serf was required to return to his native land at the expiration of his contract, or else remain in South Africa permanently as a serf, or purchase his freedom at an exorbitant price, including a special annual tax imposed upon him. Free or bound, all Asiatics, including Indians, were denied the franchise. The usual conditions of registration, segregation, and inequity prevailed generally in all the South African states. Thus, residence was restricted, and usually ended up in the slum areas of the larger cities. In certain states, Indians could own no property, and could neither purchase nor hold land. In Natal, where Gandhi lived, Indians had to carry passes, or licenses, to be on the streets after nightfall. Even so, they were not infrequently kicked off the sidewalk, or otherwise abused. One of Gandhi's experiences was that of being denied

access to a church at a Sunday evening service. Only whites could be allowed in this church to worship the one God and Father of us all!

Added to this oppression and degradation forced upon the humble representatives of the great Indian people was the suffering endured by the natives of South Africa, who, in spite of their numbers, were the utterly helpless victims of their white masters. Here prejudice and hate and fear were permitted to do their worst. If the troubles of the Indians seemed at times to be insignificant, it was because these Indians were a comparatively small group, a few thousands, as set over against the hundreds of thousands, and even millions, of the native Africans. But it was all one problem, eased a bit by the realization that liberty gained by one section of the population would inevitably be shared by others.

That Gandhi was outraged by what he found in South Africa, especially as affecting his own people, goes without saying. All his life he was acutely sensitive to cruelty and injustice, and quick to find ways of overcoming them. Here, at the very opening of his career, this young and inexperienced lawyer, without influence, money, or any wide acquaintanceship, was to reveal the courage, resolution, and shrewd resourcefulness which were to characterize his years of patient leadership, first in South Africa, and later in his homeland, India. Within a few weeks this new arrival was summoning a meeting in Pretoria to survey the general situation, and more particularly to protest against new proposals of the government for the enslavement of Indian laborers. Already he was starting the work, later destined to be so important, of organizing committees, issuing leaflets and pamphlets, memorializing the government, calling mass demonstrations in refusal to obey discriminatory laws

and regulations. Gandhi was himself at times frightened by the effectiveness of his activity, and the readiness of the coolies to respond, at any peril, to his call. Within a few months, this strange man, so brave and self-forgetting, was everywhere recognized and respected as a leader. He suddenly became excessively busy, hearing complaints, organizing resistance, addressing meetings, rushing from one part of the country to another, in gratitude acclaimed and heeded. Nevertheless, at the end of a year, when his law business was settled, and the errand which had originally brought him to South Africa was thus completed, Gandhi made every preparation to return to India.

On the very eve of his departure, however, new difficulties appeared. A new crisis was at hand. Gandhi consented to remain for a short time longer. Then, more or less reluctantly, he saw that he was obligated to these people—that there was nothing for him to do but settle down and see the struggle through. He opened law offices in Pretoria, summoned his wife and children from India to join him, and enlisted, for the duration, in the movement of revolt and deliverance which he had done so much to start. For twenty years now, South Africa remained his home and arena of public service. During this period of two decades (1893-1914), Gandhi returned to India on occasion, for longer or shorter stays, thus keeping contact with leaders of opinion in his own country. Once he journeyed to England and saw important figures in the political and social world. But South Africa was now the center of his thought and life, and the campaign in South Africa his appointed work.

Gandhi did two things in South Africa—he con-

quered himself, and he conquered the government which oppressed his people.

Gandhi was organizing a great movement of resistance to the white man's rule and practice in South Africa, in which he proposed to enlist all the thousands of Indians who were victims of injustice and cruel personal treatment. He understood, vaguely, that this movement would last for a long time and involve much suffering; and he saw, clearly, that it could be sustained only by a multitude of people disciplined in each individual case to obedience and endurance. Outward action could only be made effective by inward character. Especially was this true of himself who, as the leader and exemplar, must show the perfect way. So he began that rigorous bodily training which had to do, first of all, with clothing and diet and the rule of poverty. Basic was the idea of possessing nothing but the few and simple articles which were necessary for efficient, healthy and decent living. He must own nothing that was not owned and used by the poorest in the land! The logic of this resolve was the vegetarian diet regulated to the minimum of physical subsistence, and the bare covering of the body's nakedness. We would call these practices a type of asceticism, not unlike that of Francis of Assisi and the Christian saints. But Gandhi always repudiated this idea, insisting that his regimen marked the natural way of living. It was the contrary way of flattering the flesh and indulging the appetites which was unnatural, and thus a betrayal of the higher attributes of manhood.

A deeper and more difficult discipline was that of taming the passions, more particularly that of sex. It may well seem incredible to those who knew Gandhi only casually, or in his later years, that he ever had any problems of physical or temperamental self-control. But in

his autobiography, *My Experiments with Truth,* which ranks with Rousseau's *Confessions* as the frankest book of the kind ever written, Gandhi shows that, in his youth and early maturity, he was a man of strong and gusty passions. In his relations with Kasturbai, his wife, he was scrupulously faithful. But in his intercourse with her, was he not moving on a lower rather than a higher level of expression? Apart from its basic biological function, sex was surely physical indulgence of the grossest description, and its control therefore must mean nothing less than complete eradication. To most of us here in the Western world, with our very different philosophy of life, it seems a mad rushing to extremes, a puritanical excess, for Gandhi and Kasturbai to agree, as they did, to live together as brother and sister rather than as husband and wife. We count this a debasement and denial of one of the most beautiful as well as intimate functions of existence, which justifies and therewith glorifies the marriage relation quite apart from the procreation of children. But to Gandhi this pragmatic aspect of conjugal experience was the one thing which might occasion resort to the sex act. Failing this deliberate purpose of conception, there should be no sexual life as such. So Gandhi adopted the rule of abstinence, and therewith ended for good and all his commerce with sex.

There remained those faults of temper and disposition which mark the difference between an ordered and a disordered type of life. Here again the autobiography reveals that Gandhi had a problem of control. But his struggle against the asperity and anger which occasionally broke forth was far easier than his struggle against sex, as these failings were dangerous only as they were allowed to run riot within the blood. With Gandhi they were the evidence of a potency of spirit which must be

saved from mad eruption. In a few years, Gandhi was the most serene and even-tempered of men. His emotions, like Plato's chariot horses, were in harness and ran wild no more.

But Gandhi's chief problem was not so much with himself as with his followers, who had to be trained to a discipline to match his own. Fundamental and therefore primary was the rule of nonviolence—in all the fight for freedom and justice, there must be no resort, under whatsoever provocation, to the use of force. This was an extraordinary code of conduct, especially for people as primitive and sore beset as these Indians in South Africa. But Gandhi saw it justified from every point of view. Thus, he recognized how ridiculous it was for a few thousand ill-trained men and women, devoid of money and resources, to take up arms and fight with any hope of victory over the Empire. "The British," he wrote, "want us to put the struggle on the plane of machine-guns. They have weapons, and we have not. Our only assurance of beating them is to keep it on the plane where we have weapons and they have not." In addition there was the right and wrong of the question. Of this Gandhi had no doubts, especially since his correspondence with the great Tolstoi, who identified nonviolence with Christianity, and interpreted it as the universal law of the spirit. If they were to win and hold the victory, they must be worthy of the victory. They must be as pure within as they expect to be triumphant without. So nonviolence must be the basis of their fight.

But what does a nonviolent fight mean? Gandhi speaks lightly of "the weapons" which the Indians have, and the British with their machine guns have not. What are these weapons, and where are they forged and found? To which question there is no answer save in the sheer

terms of the spirit! This is the language which Gandhi is speaking when he lays down the principle and practice of nonviolence. He is repeating St. Paul's injunction when the Apostle exhorted his disciples to rely on "the sword of the spirit." The nonresistants, or "nonviolent resistants," as Gandhi preferred to call them, must first of all organize their strength and purpose into a single compact body of discipline, like an army stripped of the weapons that kill, so that the enemy will have all of them to deal with, and not any individual, or group of individuals, cut off from the whole. In place of inflicting pain and death, they must themselves be ready, even eager, to receive pain and death, and therewith suffer and die without complaint. "If I hit my adversary, that is of course violence; but to be truly nonviolent, I must love him and pray for him even when he hits me." The weapons which the nonresistants use from the arsenal of the spirit are obedience, patience, forbearance, long-suffering, courage, and good will. These are weapons against which there is no victory. "Soul force" (*Satyagraha*), as Gandhi preferred to call it, if faithfully and bravely served, must in the end win out, since none other than God is on their side.

This is shown by what Gandhi was able to do with his Indian followers in South Africa. Illiterate, poor, downtrodden, afraid, these humble men and women surrendered their destiny into Gandhi's keeping, yielded to his authority, and followed where he led. He on his part received these thousands of unfortunates as though they were his children, and welded them into a single body of nonviolent resistants against the humiliation and degradation which they had so long endured. At his magic touch, slaves became free men, obedient only to his word. Gandhi's campaign was a marvel of ingenuity

and effectiveness. Thus, he established on the outskirts of Phoenix, fourteen miles from the important city of Durban, the Phoenix Farm, as it was called—a plot of more than a thousand acres to serve as a source of supplies, a base of operations, and a harbor of refuge. Here he taught the Indians, women as well as men, to resist the law when it was unjustly directed against themselves in prejudice and contempt, and to suffer en masse the consequences. He disciplined his followers to act in unison in staging great demonstrations of protest and revolt against inequity. He marched them in a solid body to places of conflict where they could invite arrest and crowd the jails with hundreds of resistants who sought imprisonment as their witness against oppression. Again and again Gandhi called upon his people for a general strike which took the Indians from their jobs and therewith paralyzed the social and industrial life of whole communities. He stirred the interest and sympathy of high-class Indians in South Africa and abroad, and rallied them to the help of their afflicted brethren. He did all this without striking a blow, drawing a drop of blood, or stirring anger and ill will. On the contrary, he trained his Indians to go out of their way to grant favors to the enemy, and come to their aid in the hour of distress or danger. Thus, during the Boer War and the later Zulu rebellion, while ardently in sympathy with the natives, Gandhi organized neutral relief units and led them to the front, to bury the dead and minister to the wounded. On the occasion of the great plague in Johannesburg he called off all resistance, and placed his people freely at the disposal of the authorities, to serve even unto death the multiplying victims of the horror. Thus, in every conceivable way, did he seek to demonstrate that he had no enmity against the govern-

ment, but sought only the co-operation of government in the correction of error and the abolition of evil. He sought only that his people might have the same rights and privileges under government as all other citizens, and be treated as fairly and kindly.

Thus the fight for freedom went on year after year. What Gandhi himself suffered during these years of ceaseless labor and sacrifice has not yet been told. Once at least he was mobbed, and all but lynched. On another dreadful occasion he was assaulted with intent to kill, and after being terribly beaten, was kicked into the gutter more dead than alive. He went to prison, sometimes accompanied by Kasturbai, more times than any record shows. He was repeatedly insulted, defamed, accused, and decried. More than once he was afflicted with illness which threatened to be fatal. But never was he angry, nor did he seek revenge. He knew that to forgive and love one's enemies was in the end to turn the edge of their hate, and overcome their hostility. Inevitable was the coming of the day when Gandhi, as the leader of revolt, was summoned to the office of Premier Smuts, there to receive the surrender of his baffled and tormented foe. Gandhi had won—or rather nonviolence had won. Irresistible, unconquerable is this instrument of policy when implemented by a soul that really believes in it, and is not afraid to practice it! His work done, Gandhi could now return to India, there to stay and meet destiny on a larger scale and to a vaster issue.

The story of South Africa is one of the immortal epics of history. It is great in itself, just as a chapter in the long struggle upon this earth for liberty. But it is greater still in its relation to the stupendous revolution which was astir in India. For this it was a kind of rehearsal or preparation. To borrow a musical figure, the place of

the South African episode in the score of human events was not so much that of an opera as it was that of an overture to an opera. It was the announcement of the themes which were to dominate Gandhi's soul through the remainder of his days, and of the harmonies and disharmonies in which these themes were to be unfolded into the final paean of triumph.

Thus, when Gandhi appeared in India, after his long absence of twenty years in South Africa, he was the fully developed figure which the world was so soon to recognize and at last to acclaim as the most impressive and formidable leader of his time. He had been perfectly fashioned in South Africa for the greater work he had now to do. Every lineament of his personality was in place, every outline of his personality sharp and clear. His garb, his physical habits, his manners of speech, his methods of procedure, his rules of life, above all his emotions and their direction and control to appointed ends, all these and other qualities were now developed and set in permanent relationship one with another. Between the gawky young man who landed in South Africa in 1893, and the older man who left South Africa to return to India in 1914, there was a complete transformation in all the elements of flesh and spirit that make a human being. But between the mature man who arrived in India in 1914, and the older man who was assassinated in 1948, there was no essential difference. On his reappearance in his country, he was the same personality, save for the scars of combat and the waning powers of age, whom the Indian people saw and followed to the end. Long before his death it was agreed that the Mahatma was the perfect specimen of Indian leader—a man as though raised up, by some divine influence, from out the very body of his people, to mold and fashion

them for liberty. What he was, in his hour of strength, was what the South African experience made him. Says Edwin Markham, in his great poem on Lincoln,

> When the Norn Mother saw the Whirlwind Hour
> Greatening and darkening as it hurried on,
> She left the Heaven of Heroes and came down
> To make a man to meet the mortal need.*

That was what South Africa did with Gandhi—made "a man to meet the mortal need" of India and the world.

But South Africa did more than this! It made not only a man for the hour's "need," but his tools as well. Thus, there must have been great fear in Gandhi's heart when he first undertook to put into action his campaign of nonviolence. This had never before been tried, at least on so large a scale. Single individuals, like Leo Tolstoi, had tried it in their own personal lives. Small groups of individuals, like the Quakers, had put it bravely and successfully to the test. But until Gandhi came, there had never been an attempt to apply this idealistic principle to great masses of men. South Africa, therefore, became an experiment with truth. It was through all these years a kind of laboratory where Gandhi tested out his theories, to see if they would work. It was a school wherein he disciplined his own life, and the lives of tens of thousands of his followers, to the courage, patience, and long-suffering which he knew they must all master together if they were to win their fight. It was a training ground where day after day he learned the lessons of organization and spiritual morale. When Gandhi arrived in India after his long struggle in Africa,

* "Lincoln, the Man of the People," from *Lincoln and Other Poems*. Copyright, 1901, 1927, by Edwin Markham and used by permission of Virgil Markham.

he was a man who had mastered an art as well as adopted an ideal, and knew no distrust or fear. He was confident now, and assured, because he had worked through an experiment, and seen it produce the results he sought. Give him time, and he would free India and mankind.

III

The second period of Gandhi's life runs from 1914 to 1947, the years when the Mahatma was the undisputed leader of the Indian people in their stupendous struggle for national independence. It is amazing, and also a bit amusing, to recall that Gandhi did not anticipate the intensity or the long continuance of this battle against the British crown. On the contrary, he returned to India, arrayed in the prestige and authority of his great victory in South Africa, convinced and content that his work of public service was over, and he could henceforth dedicate himself unstintingly to his family and his profession.

It was true that a war was on, World War I, which the Empire used to test the loyalty of the Indian people. It was also true that this 1914 war was in essence a "struggle for Europe," and its issues therefore far removed from any connection with the interests of the Far East. In the beginning, the Indians, like other peoples subject to imperial rule, had been dragged into the conflict without consultation or consent. As the war went on, the Indians were held to the fighting by the sheer power of Britain, coupled with the instinctive loyalty of the people to their rulers. There were those in India, to be sure, predominantly violent revolutionists, who contended that this crisis in arms was a God-given opportunity to strike for freedom. Involved with a potent enemy on land and sea, and in the air, the

world around, Britain could do nothing to hold India against real revolt. But there were others, including Gandhi and most of the more moderate leaders, who were in favor of withdrawing, or at least of suspending, their active hostility against the Empire for the duration of the war. On the one hand, there seemed something basically shameful in taking advantage of the dire extremity of the British people in their struggle against Germany. It was doubtful if liberty could be won, or if won maintained, by methods of vengeance and violence. On the other hand, there was the surety, as it then seemed, that Britain would recognize, and reward the loyalty of the Indians in standing by the Empire. None other than Lloyd-George himself, Prime Minister of the realm, had promised action after victory was achieved, and what could this be but that grant of dominion status which represented at this time the farthest design and desire of the contemporary Indian leaders?

How ironical to recall that, during World War I and after, the great masses of the Indian people, as instructed and led by the All-India Congress of that day, did not ask for the full freedom of their country! All they asked, and indeed expected to receive, was that dominion status which had become identified with liberty inside the British Commonwealth of nations. Had this grant been proffered by the crown in good faith at the close of World War I, there would in all probability have been no such struggle for national independence as vexed the next thirty years. But in this case, as in the familiar case of the American Revolution, concessions were too little and came too late. When Great Britain reached the time when she was ready to establish India as a dominion, Gandhi and the great army of Indian libera-

tors had already moved beyond this point. No redress of grievances, no proffer of partial freedom, was satisfactory. In the second World War, as not in the first, it was full freedom or nothing!

But all this lay in the lap of the future. In 1914-1918, India was ready to serve the British Empire and trust to her good faith. Gandhi, for example, participated in the work of recruiting and of maintaining the morale of a confused and sorely troubled people. Unable himself, as a nonresistant, to serve Britain on the battle-front, he insisted that those not trammeled by his convictions against force and violence should take up arms and rally to Britain's call. This, of course, involved Gandhi in apparent inconsistency, even in charges of disloyalty to India's cause. How could he ask others to do what he could not, or would not, do himself? But what seemed to be so apparent in this case was not the reality of the situation at all. Gandhi, in his appeals, was asking only that each man among them in India should live out the logic of his own convictions. If he believed that there was a place for violence in the moral economy of the universe, then this place was now opening before him. It was this man's business to take up arms for Britain. If, however, as in his own case, there was the spiritual ideal of nonviolence predominant within his soul and therewith a rule of life, then this believer must resolutely refuse to fight and kill, and, as an alternative, offer other service on behalf of the English people in their distress. The essential thing was that Indians and English should hold together in this dangerous hour, and with the defeat and destruction of Germany move on to larger liberties.

It was thus that Gandhi, at the hour of victory in 1918, felt that his distasteful work was done. Germany

was now prostrate in the dust, and the hour therefore at hand for the recognition and reward of India's fidelity in the long struggle against a common enemy. Here was England's opportunity to fulfill a pledge, and therewith to win forever the friendship and gratitude of four hundred millions of men and women long subject to alien rule and now at last made free. But the word of deliverance did not come. Month after month passed by, and dominion status within the Commonwealth was not granted, or even proposed. On the contrary, with the Indians becoming restive and their leaders alarmed, the Empire, suddenly moved to panic, enacted legislation which denied to India the liberties she sought, and imposed suddenly, and arbitrarily, a suspension of all basic civil liberties. Without warning, Britain bound her subjects in the straight jacket of abject obedience. And at the fateful moment, as though by some decree of heaven visited upon an outraged people, there came the supreme horror of the Amritsar massacre (April 13, 1919), wherein some four hundred men, women, and children were wantonly slaughtered by British troops, and many more hundreds wounded, and reduced beneath the lash of tyranny to insult and humiliation. In an instant the people of India became wide awake in one vast movement of revolt, with Gandhi at their head, to win for India, the motherland, by the same methods and to the same end, the victory already won in South Africa.

The real struggle for India's freedom began in 1921, when at last the people were reluctantly convinced that they were suffering deliberate betrayal at the hands of Britain. In one instant impulse of outrage and resolve the Indian people, in this hour of crisis, turned to Gandhi for counsel and leadership. He must now do on a large nationalistic scale what he had done on a smaller

scale in South Africa. Gone were his ideas of retirement into private and professional life. The call was now again the people's call, and he must answer it, and win again the long and patient struggle to be free.

The 1921 revolt was, in many ways, the most stupendous event in Gandhi's life. Its very suddenness brought terror to the hearts of the English. Nothing had been seen like this since the days of the Sepoy Rebellion! Its completeness brought not merely hope but assurance that India had found the way to victory. In a night, so to speak, Gandhi won that allegiance of the people which he held through the years as the arbiter of destiny. Like a flood this revolt swept the land from horizon to horizon. How fast and far it might have gone, what it might have achieved in this initial test of Gandhi's methods, will never be known. For, in one of the most dramatic episodes of his career, Gandhi himself called off the struggle in rebuke of a breakdown of the nonresistant discipline which threatened the integrity and true success of the movement. But the augury of victory at a later date was all that Gandhi and his associates could wish.

Thus, it was the testimony of no less a person than Lord Lloyd, Governor General of Bombay, that in the opening months of his campaign, Gandhi came "within the breadth of an eyelash" of securing the emancipation of his people. So unconquerable is the nonviolent resistant, so powerful the man or movement which wields not the sword of steel but the sword of the spirit! The British Empire, like the Roman Empire before it, knew exactly what to do with an enemy that comes armed against her. Every empire, every military power, has long since learned the lesson of how to handle an attack of violence, whether it be by a mob or an army. They have

fought their foes through so many years, and under such varieties of circumstance, and to such ends of victory, that they have nothing now to learn. No effective instrument of force and violence is beyond their knowledge and expert use. But when a man, or rather a disciplined army of men, comes against an empire bare-handed and bare-footed, equipped not even with stones and staves, practicing not violence in any form but absolute nonviolence, loving their enemies and seeking ways not of destroying but of serving them even as they love and serve their friends, the empire is helpless. It knows not what to do! The *New York Times*, in a notable editorial published on the day following the Mahatma's death, spoke of the British Empire as strangely "baffled" by Gandhi's persistent practice of nonviolence. Baffled? Of course it was baffled. All it could seem to do was to arrest Gandhi and his multitudinous followers and thrust them behind prison bars. But behind these bars, Gandhi became more powerful than ever. In a moment of that charming humor which characterized his life, Gandhi said that he had early discovered that he could make the best bargains with Britain when he was in jail. Then the mind of the world was focused upon him, and by reason of sympathy demanded a justice which was beyond all reach when he was at large. So Gandhi in prison was a force more potent than "an army with banners." How to conquer this man and his followers clad only in the panoply of the loin cloth was a question never answered by the British.

It was thus in 1921 that Gandhi began a fight for India which did not end until 1947. It was such a fight as the world had never seen before. There were certain things that Gandhi did that nobody else had ever done, or had ever thought of doing. This campaign was his

campaign, marked by the peculiar genius of his life, and dominated by the sublime influence of his spirit.

For one thing, from the beginning, Gandhi insisted upon identifying his life with the lives of the great masses of the people. There had been champions of Indian independence before Gandhi—he was not the first to proclaim that his countrymen should be free! But these earlier leaders were most of them men far separated from the ways of thought and life characteristic of the common people. They were men who had been educated in the Western world, who wore Western clothes, who insisted upon using the English tongue. Gandhi himself, in his youthful days, did his utmost to adapt the custom of his life to the Western example. But something there was in the very core of his being which seemed instinctively to rebel against this abject surrender of personality. Gandhi understood, when he was almost alone in this conviction, that if there was any one thing more necessary than another to the recovery of Eastern life, it was a union, deep and sure, between the leaders of the Indian cause and the people whom they served. And here they were separated by a gulf of outward habit and inward thought, which had never yet been bridged! Till Gandhi came, nobody really saw how basic was this necessity. But Gandhi saw it, and straightway acted upon it. This was the reason why he insisted upon wearing the loin cloth as his regular garb. For years here in this Western world, so sure of its own ways of life, we could not understand why Gandhi did this gross and grotesque thing. Failing to find any rational explanation in terms of our own practice, we lightly concluded that Gandhi was a queer man, perhaps a little cracked, in any case a demagogue given to sensational performances. What we quite

failed to see was that Gandhi was walking all but naked as a sign and symbol of his faith. Since unnumbered millions of Indians, in their dire poverty, could wear nothing but the loin cloth, then he would himself wear this loin cloth, that he might thereby be identified the more closely with the masses of his people. This was the reason also why he made himself propertyless, stripping himself of practically every possession in the world. Since the Indian people, most of them, owned nothing, then he would be one with them, and himself own nothing. Here was the reason why he established his *ashram*, as it was called, and lived there in company with his followers. The *ashram* was nothing in the world but a kind of model, or duplicate, of a typical Indian village. There were seven hundred thousand of these villages, large and small, in India. In these villages the swarming millions of his fellow countrymen had their homes, not because they chose to do so, but because they were born to this wretched estate, out of which they had never been able to rise. If the people thus lived from necessity, why should he not live on this same level by choice? Not as a prosperous solicitor in the city, but as a half-starved peasant on the land! Thus might he be the more closely attached to the people whom he loved, and whom he sought to lead to liberty.

In my last letter from the Mahatma, which I found awaiting me on my return from India in January, 1948, he expressed, in his characteristically humorous way, some feeling of regret that I had traveled so fast and so far in his great country, by airplanes when I could get them, and by railroad trains and automobiles when I could not. Always it was speed, *speed*, that I might arrive early and leave early, and thus cover the widest possible area of ground. Gently did Gandhi remind me, in his letter,

that India was the land of the bullock cart, and that if I had really wanted to see the people on my visit, I might well have traveled from place to place in this native vehicle. This prompted me to remember how for years, in his journeyings among his people, Gandhi chose not to ride in trains, or, if he had no choice on any particular occasion, to ride third and not first class. The oxcart was not unknown to him, nor the automobile, but mostly he walked, day after unwearying day, along the roads and bypaths to far-distant stretches of the countryside. Since the great majority of the people walked, sometimes hundreds of miles, on an appointed visitation to some remote village or sacred shrine, then he would walk too —a kind of pilgrim, sandal-shod and leaning upon his long and sturdy staff, making his way deep into the hearts of the multitudes. There are few places, even in India, with its scant railroads and dusty roadways, where the people do not recall, as a kind of legend, the day when Bapu (father) came among them.

Another thing that Gandhi did in his campaign for freedom. He taught the people, for the first time, the secret of personal dignity and self-respect. For nearly two hundred years the Indians had lived subject to the alien rule of Britain. In the rigorous caste system of their society, the English residents in the land came to constitute a kind of supreme caste to which even the native Brahmins were inferior,—the English at the top, and all the rest "untouchables." In this experience of political and cultural dependence, the Indians had become slavish and subservient in spirit. Bowing obsequiously to the English sahib, recognizing his will as law, the natives did not dare to claim even their souls their own. Then Gandhi came, and the scene was changed! Dowered with an unshakable calmness and courage, conscious of

his own deep sense of honor, the Mahatma was able to convey to others all that he felt and treasured within himself. The unlettered and illiterate millions of his fellow countrymen he raised from out the spiritual slough of their social shame. Once again the Indian people stood erect, straight and tall in their rediscovered manhood, and dared at last to look their rulers in the face. It was a process of transformation which Gandhi set at work, moved by his personal example, which was itself rooted in his conviction of the dignity of man. Inevitably this process was slow, tried again and again only to fail. But in the end, the Mahatma achieved his goal. After years of suffering and sacrifice, he saw the Indians lifted up, by their own efforts, out of their subjection and debasement, and knew, as their rulers knew, that the long and costly fight was won. Worthy of liberty, they suddenly possessed it. For once achieve self-respect and mutual self-regard within the masses, and their power is supreme. Shelley acclaimed this years ago, addressing the English workers:

> "Rise like lions after slumber
> In unvanquishable number—
> Shake your chains to earth like dew
> Which in sleep had fallen on you.
> Ye are many—they are few."

It was in pursuit of this principle of self-reliance that Gandhi organized the Indian people, more or less unconsciously, around the rallying center of his own personality. For years the Mahatma spent a good part of his time just traveling from village to village throughout all the vast area of continental India. When he had come to a village and lived there for a few days, and then had gone upon his way as a pilgrim to the next

village, he always left behind him what we have learned to call here in the West a "cell"—i.e., an organized group of men and women, just a few of them in each village, who understood the movement for independence and were ready to act on its behalf. They knew what Gandhi meant by nonviolent resistance. They had been taught the discipline of this way of life. And here they were now, his representatives and followers, quick to heed his word and do his work. It can be said that, after a period of years, he had organized the whole Indian people around himself, and pledged them to heed and answer his call for independence. The sheer power of such a multitudinous organization, led by such a personality, proved indeed to be "unvanquishable."

Another thing that Gandhi did at this critical time must rank as supreme evidence of his genius and imagination. This was to give to the surging masses of the Indian people something to do personally in support of the nation's struggle for liberty. In all such matters of reform and social change there comes sooner or later the question as to what each individual can do, in his humble station and with his limited powers, to help the cause along. The situation is that of great numbers of human beings eager to act in some effective way, but with nothing at hand to occupy their energies. Here Gandhi was unfailingly resourceful. Years ago, for example, he conceived the idea of placing a spinning wheel in every house throughout the land, for the native production of cotton cloth. This would establish a home industry for the supply of an article of central importance in the nation's life, and at the same time strike a mortal blow at England's manufacture of this article. Every wheel which was set turning in an Indian village meant one less wheel turning in an English factory in Leeds

or Birmingham. Thus would India cut connection with British economy, and make herself self-sustaining in the vast field of the cotton trade. In launching this campaign, Gandhi equipped himself with a primitive hand spinning wheel, and organized the routine of his daily life to include two or three hours each day of spinning *khaddar* cloth. Sometimes he worked by day, sometimes at night; he turned his wheel when he was alone, but not infrequently when he was talking with some visitor, or dictating letters to his secretary; always on his travels he carried with him his precious wheel and spun his cloth whenever opportunity offered. To the practical-minded American, with his fixed ideas of mass production, this performance seemed to be a curious waste of time and strength. But what was the Mahatma really doing? He was teaching the unnumbered millions of his fellow countrymen that there was something which each one of them could do for liberty. That if each and every one of them would keep a spinning wheel turning within his home, and thus spread abroad, on a vast national scale, the manufacture of *khaddar*, India upon the instant would be delivered of the economic tyranny of the British cotton trade, and thus economically, if not yet politically, be free. Gandhi gave the Indians something to do, carried the production of a staple article to the humblest home dweller in the land, and therewith made him an effective instrument of revolt. Millions of spinning wheels turned and turned for years, in obedience to the Mahatma's shrewd and sublime example.

Another instance of this policy was the famous march to Dandi in 1930, when Gandhi and a group of his followers walked two hundred miles together across the Indian countryside to the seashore, and the Mahatma waded into the sea, lifted up a pail of the sea water, and

brought it to the shore to be distilled into salt, and therewith made to symbolize the emancipation of the people from the tyranny and exploitation of the iniquitous salt tax imposed upon them by the Empire. In this act Gandhi displayed a curious ability to dramatize the great struggle for liberty. I have found myself saying, on more than one occasion, that a fight is never won until it is dramatized and its cause therewith made to live in the hearts of men. The American Revolution was turned to victory not at Yorktown at the end, but at the Boston Tea Party in the beginning. John Brown, and his sons, and a mere handful of followers, enacted at Harper's Ferry a passion play which made the Civil War inevitable, and a triumph for the freedom of the slave. Christianity has had, through centuries down even to our day, the unique advantage of the crucifixion as an immortal drama of redemption. By such an act at Dandi, Gandhi won the allegiance of his countrymen and the world. Here he taught the multitudes what they could do for the sacred cause of liberty. They could wade into the all-encompassing sea, as upon a stage, distill the salt, and therewith display, for all to see, their freedom from British rule.

Gandhi was the man who discovered early in his career that one thing all Indians could do was to go to prison for their cause. Again and again Gandhi sought imprisonment, and was not denied. This act was taken of his own free choice, and therewith established the dignity and enormous effectiveness of serving a sentence behind the bars of a jail, in defiance of the authorities. Since Gandhi had done it, then everybody could do it, and in a short time the English prisons became so flooded with men, women, and even children, gladly volunteering for sacrifice in India's cause, that the govern-

ment had no room in which to harbor criminals. In visiting India today, one finds oneself involved in a curious experience. Sooner or later, in talking with one's host, who may be a provincial governor, a counselor of state, a judge, a chancellor of a university, a scientist, an author, a business or professional man, one discovers that this gracious and highly cultivated gentleman has a prison record, and is proud of it. On my visit to India in 1947, I came to feel that everybody worthwhile in the country's life had at one time or another been to prison as an offender against His Majesty's rule. This gave a tone of exaltation to public life, raised a standard of service and sacrifice, which had carried over into the experience of a free India and which I was beholding on my travels. One felt it in the presence of the great statesmen of the hour, and of the university students who cherished glowing memories. This stirred me to the depths of my being. Also it set me wondering what would be the effect upon Indian life when the generation which had known this sacrificial experience had in due time passed away. It was Gandhi, of course, who set the example and took the initial risk. The Mahatma went to prison first—and tens of thousands were proud to follow on. A supreme example of the leader's genius for finding a post of service for everyone who would himself do something for his country in the hour of trial!

One thinks of Gandhi's fasts—the Great Fast, for example—in connection with his numerous prison terms. On occasion the two experiences became one. Thus, more than once, the Mahatma fasted in prison when, for some sound reason, it was more important that he be outside rather than inside the prison walls. This action set no such general example for Gandhi's followers as voluntary imprisonment, since it could be

carried through successfully only by persons of supreme physical and spiritual attributes. Gandhi himself resorted to it only at rare intervals. But it made an enormous impression upon a people who understood fasting as a part of their religion. If this impression did not carry over into the world outside of India, it was because it was not understood, and had no sanctity as a tradition. The case for fasting as Gandhi fasted is entangled with a variety of viewpoints, some of which have no relevance to Western thought, much less to Western practice. One aspect was made familiar years ago by Bronson Alcott, the Concord sage, in the remarkable private school which he conducted for a time in Boston. One of the things that Alcott used to do, to the vast amazement of parents and teachers alike, was to take upon himself the punishment meted out to some offending pupil. Thus, Alcott would stand in the corner of the schoolroom, or be held after school hours, or write and rewrite some text or statement as the morning lesson. Of course, in Alcott's progressive school, there was little opportunity or need for punishment. The school was not run on punitive principles. But when blame had to be assigned, it was the teacher rather than the pupil who was held responsible. This was one of the reasons for Gandhi's fasts. He suffered starvation, pain, weakness, even the near approach of death, in protest against and punishment for the unheeding action of some rajah, or the British government, or the Indian people themselves. In these moral offenses, he must share the blame and pay the price in a voluntary fast. This was the perfect dedication of the Mahatma to India's cause, and the supreme pledge to God.

What Gandhi was doing in these creative actions was giving to the Indian people the weapons wherewith to

carry on their fight against Britain—weapons of unimaginable power, guaranteed, if used patiently and bravely, to bring victory in conflict. Ordinary weapons were of no use to India in her struggle against the greatest military empire since that of ancient Rome. Sword and spear were as useless to a disarmed and untrained people as they were spiritually wrong. If India was to win her fight for freedom, it must be on the higher levels of human effort—in this case the weapons of nonviolence, once condemned and ridiculed, now regarded with awe and wonder. It was Gandhi who learned to trust these spiritual arms, and to forge them for the triumphant use of his countrymen. In doing this, on a national scale, Gandhi wrought a deed unprecedented in the history of mankind. The principle behind his work was nothing new. On the contrary, it was as old as Buddha, as sublime as Christ. But Gandhi carried this principle to extremes unknown before, and applied it not merely to individuals but to mankind. What had hitherto been a personal virtue was transformed into a social discipline. Gandhi established nonviolence on a vast national scale, in a struggle involving the fate of multitudes of men. Despising the use of sword and spear, the Mahatma made these weapons of steel to be of noneffect when poised at the bare breasts of men who were not afraid of death, and loved rather than hated their enemies. What wonder that, in less than a generation, an unarmed people had wrung their liberties from the unwilling hands of the mightiest of empires!

A summary of this second and all-important period of Gandhi's life, which ended on August 15, 1947, with the triumph of Indian freedom, I find in a paragraph written by a distinguished contemporary scholar,

Dr. Francis Neilson, in his great work, *The Tragedy of Europe*. "Gandhi," he writes, "is unique. There is no record of a man in his position challenging a great empire. A Diogenes in action, a St. Francis in humility, a Socrates in wisdom, he reveals to the world the utter paltriness of the methods of the statesman who relies upon force to gain his end. In this contest, spiritual integrity triumphs over the physical opposition of the forces of the state."

This was Gandhi's triumph—this his achievement. This marks his place in history.

IV

The third period of Gandhi's life was brief and tragic. It began on Independence Day, and ended with the assassination five months and fourteen days later. This was the period, signalized by Gandhi's absence from the independence festivities, when it seemed momentarily as though India was about to exercise the prerogatives of freedom by plunging into the horror of civil war. What happened is understandable enough. Partition, the separation of Pakistan from India proper, for which atrocity Mr. Jinnah and his junta of Mohammedan zealots were so largely responsible, was accepted under duress by the Indian leaders, ironically enough to preserve peace between Hindus and Mohammedans. Gandhi was all along opposed to the idea and program of partition. "He refused," writes Louis Fischer, in his biography of the Mahatma, "until his death to approve of it." Others refused as well. But the step was at last taken, and disaster, already anticipated by violent outbreaks in Bengal, broke loose upon the land. This might easily have been foreseen, as indeed it was foreseen by Gandhi and feared by Nehru. For partition meant the

vivisection of a nation, and those people who were called upon to suffer the agony of vivisection, in the Punjab as in Bengal, went crazy with pain and grief.

As the fires of fear burst into a consuming conflagration of hate, Gandhi arose to meet what seemed to be the catastrophic failure of his lifework. He himself seemed to concede failure, for in the supreme humility of his spirit, he accepted responsibility for what was happening. All India seemed ready to go up in flames. It was Gandhi who overcame disaster.

I insisted from the beginning, as I would still insist today, that this last period of Gandhi's life was the greatest period of all. It marked the supreme and final glory of his days upon this earth. I tried to state this in my last letter to the Mahatma, written just as I was leaving India, in January, 1948. I put it this way:

> Of course you have been saddened, well-nigh overborne, by the tragedies of recent months, but you must never feel that this involves any breakdown of your lifework. Human nature cannot bear too much—it cracks under too great a strain, and the strain in this case was as terrific as it was sudden. But your teaching remained as true and your leadership as sound as ever. Single-handed you saved the situation and brought victory out of what seemed for the moment to be defeat. I count these last months to be the crown and climax of your unparalleled career. You were never so great as in these last dark hours.

I wrote these words in token of my fixed conviction that it was the influence of Gandhi, through the discipline of thirty years gone by, that prevented the spread of the conflagration. At no time were more than 5 per cent of the Indian people involved in the riots and

massacres, and less than ten per cent of India's territory, and through those dreadful days, over the vast range of Indian life, Moslems and Hindus lived peaceably side by side. While violence and murder were raging in north India, I was traveling in central and south India, and seeing with my own eyes the pleasant harmony of different races and religions.

But Gandhi did more than hold this disaster within bounds. For it was through his immediate influence, at those sometimes remote places where the fire was burning fiercest, that this fire was straightway extinguished. When I was in New Delhi, in October, 1947, tension was in the air, but everybody agreed, Moslem and Hindu, men great and men humble, that it was the real presence of Gandhi which had brought peace to that great city which, only a few days before, had witnessed the slaughter of hundreds of people in the public streets. Gandhi came to Delhi, as previously to Calcutta, when riot and bloodshed were all about, and as Jesus calmed the storm upon the Sea of Galilee, so Gandhi calmed and thus ended the storm of hate and madness in India.

Then Gandhi died—as Lincoln died, in the hour of triumph. "Bapu is finished," said one in whose arms he passed away. For us he was finished. That ineffable presence, that gentle smile, those eyes that had depths of beauty like visions of the eternal, that infinite tenderness and grace, that lovely hospitality of friendship, it is all gone with the frail and feeble body that fell beneath the assassin's blow. But as little in the case of Gandhi, as in the case of Jesus, was it really finished. For theirs was a power which defied both nail and bullet.

CHAPTER IV

THE MAN GANDHI

I

INDIANS may not inaccurately be described, in my judgment, as physically the most beautiful people in the world. Not only are there beautiful individuals of both sexes everywhere, but there seems to be a general standard of beauty which all the people share together. One might well expect distinction in this regard in the Brahmins, and the other upper classes, who are carefully bred and enjoy leisure and protection. But in India the lower classes, so-called, are beautiful also. I remember visiting native villages in the remote countryside and the slum sections of Calcutta and Bombay, where awful poverty prevails, and being amazed at the exquisite children who thronged about me and the handsome adults who appeared on every side. The fierce struggle for existence seems only to add a touch of lovely pathos to the features of men and women. I used to talk to the coolies who pulled the rickshas in some of the great cities just to study their faces, and discover, if possible, why these panting, sweating, toiling workers were not infrequently so charming. Even in old age, marked with the ravages of sheer physical endurance, the Indians possess a dignity and beauty which touch the heart with wonder.

At bottom, there is the brown complexion characteristic of both men and women in India. This color

varies from the lighter hues in the north, to the darker, much darker, hues in the south, but keeps none the less safely inside the extreme limits of black and white. The texture of the skin is always soft and smooth, almost shiny, like polished bronze. The physique of the average Indian is not remarkable for either height or weight, except in the case of certain carefully selective groups, like the Sikhs, for example, who are magnificent in stature. The typical Indian is shorter rather than taller, meditative rather than athletic. It is in his countenance that he is beautiful—in his regular and exquisitely proportioned features, his shining teeth, his flawless nose and brow, his thick black hair, his deep and lustrous eyes. To see a crowd of these Indians—students in a college, for example—with their eager faces all held to interest and attention, is to feel an inner flame of delight, enkindled by the fire burning in these eager hearts.

What is true of the individual man in India in terms of his native strength is true also of the individual woman in terms of her gentleness and modesty. The man is helped not at all, in any comparison of qualities, by the garb which he wears—the familiar loin cloth, or the more familiar *dhoty*, which, however adaptable to climatic conditions, is none the less the ugliest male costume ever devised by human ingenuity. In contrast, the Indian woman wears the *sari* which, in any fabric, either the most gorgeous silk or the simplest cotton, is surely the loveliest female costume since the ancient Roman toga. However clad, in poverty or wealth, a hospitable hostess in the city or a hardworking serf in the country village, the Indian woman is still the most exquisite creature in the world. Lord Byron's lines may aptly be applied to her:

She walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;
And all that's best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes.

II

As placed against this extraordinary background, Gandhi in appearance was inconspicuous and even at first sight unattractive. Unfriendly observers spoke of him more than once as "a little monkey of a man." His single garment, the familiar loin cloth, revealed a body and limbs which were gaunt, even emaciated—his ascetic life produced no surplus flesh! But his frame was large rather than small, least of all dwarfish; he was of good medium height; his hairy chest disclosed a superb muscular development which seemed remarkable in one so slight and slender in build. His weight seldom exceeded ninety pounds, though at his death he was over a hundred. In his younger years he stood erect and strong, but as time passed and activity became extreme, he took on a stooping posture, and his stride became awkward and ungainly. In his walking he had a peculiar way of hunching himself forward, a habit accentuated by his *khaddar* shawl, lightly and loosely wrapped about his shoulders, and by his leaning on a kind of pilgrim staff. In his later years, when he walked regularly, morning and evening, for exercise, he leaned his arms upon the shoulders of his nieces, who were thus supporting him when he was shot, or of young men, students and others, who chanced to be at hand. The color of his body, exposed through his wearing of the scant cloth about his middle, was dark and richly beautiful. The skin was firm to the last without a trace of age, and in its shiny bronzelike surface revealed the rigorous care of daily

washing and massage. Gandhi's ideas of cleanliness were extreme, and gave his body a purity and fragrance which did much to cover up the otherwise unfortunate features of his frame.

Gandhi's bodily condition, what we would call his "health," represented a kind of adjustment, or compromise, between extraordinary exertion on the one hand and the most meticulous care upon the other. In his mature years, when energy was at its peak, he spared himself nothing. Thus, when he was leading the great campaigns for independence from the British crown, he went out on walking expeditions from village to village, in rain or drought, day after day in killing heat, which carried him hundreds of miles into the remotest areas of his continental country. The famous march to Dandi in 1930, two hundred miles in twenty-four days, was a mere trifle. In his old age, when the partition massacres broke on the land like a volcanic eruption, he took up his staff again and strode hundreds of miles through the Moslem villages of Bengal, to restore peace and order. When, for some special reason, he traveled by train, his third-class accommodations assured him a maximum of discomfort and even danger. Again and again he endured the deprivations and exposures of prison life without a qualm. He underwent fasts which on more than one occasion carried him to the very threshold of death. Always his body was under severest stress and strain, and proved itself an instrument which on occasion bent, as when stricken by acute appendicitis, but never broke.

Gandhi thus forced himself to the limit through many years. But never did he neglect or abuse his physical organism. On the contrary, he guarded it with the most assiduous attention. Contemptuous of the practices of

modern surgery and medicine, and hostile to such absorption in the pursuit of health as to make it an obsession, which has turned America, for example, into a land of hospitals and sanitaria, Gandhi made personal hygiene a kind of hobby, and worked out rules for living which he commended not only to himself, but to his family and friends as well. Indeed, he wrote extensively on the subject in published books as well as private letters, and sought thus to carry everywhere his message of keeping well. Always was he the experimentalist in this field of health, trying out this treatment and that remedy in the true method of trial and error, which he seemed somehow never to link up with those accepted processes of Western medical science which he so consistently and heartily condemned. Exercise, mainly walking in the early morning and evening hours, was a regular part of his routine. A nap in the heat of the afternoon became something of a habit. Diet was of course central to his regimen, and for years was an occasion of the most careful study and experimentation. In the end he found a diet which satisfied his bodily needs, and at the same time eliminated all temptation to indulgence. It consisted of a few basic elements of dairy and vegetable food, meager in amount and devoid of variety. A week of this diet had Louis Fischer fleeing in dismay! I remember watching Gandhi eat in London, when the evening meal was apparently taken as a favorable time for pleasant, informal conference, and wondering if I could keep alive on such a diet. Gandhi took it very seriously, but I noticed that, with his ineffable courtesy, he did not offer me his food, nor raise the subject of eating for discussion. He simply took his own practices for granted, and mine as well. Like St. Francis,

Gandhi was an ascetic, and as consistently so in his diet as in any other activity of his life.

To see and talk with Gandhi was to have one's attention riveted upon his head and face, which were as distinctive, in a very different way, as the majestic countenance of Rabindranath Tagore. Gandhi has many times been described as ugly in appearance, and not altogether without reason. Thus, his large, round skull was closely shaven, except only for the little tassel of hair in the back, which was a kind of vestigial survival of innocent superstition in his Hindu faith. His ears protruded out of all right proportion to his head. Huge spectacles perched precariously upon his large and somewhat flattened nose. His big mouth and thick lips were topped by a scraggly mustache, which succeeded not at all in hiding the fact that he was minus many of his teeth. Here were features which might well be the despair of sculptor and painter. But all these were forgotten in the lustrous radiance of Gandhi's eyes and the quiet music of his voice.

His eyes were his most remarkable feature. They had depth and light, like the sea, and were without question the open doorway to his soul. They reflected every facet of his inner thought. Thus, when the talk was on some sad or tragic topic, his eyes seemed to smolder and grow dim. There was never a trace of resentment or anger, but only pity. When the conversation turned to happier themes, his eyes began to glow, and therewith to light up unfathomable depths of feeling. His sense of humor was instant and contagious, his eyes twinkling with a merriment which was irresistible. Gandhi's voice was gentle and soft, never in my experience rising to any upper or louder tones than those befitting personal conversation. He talked always without gestures or other

sign of excitement. Passion, not unknown, had been successfully subdued to the perfect discipline of the inner spirit.

III

To recall Gandhi to mind is to think of Matthew Arnold's familiar phrase, "sweetness and light." That is what he was—all sweetness of temper and radiation of soul. I suppose that gentleness, as I would call it, was his supreme characteristic—a gentleness which knew no weakness, but rather clothed with authority an innate strength of purpose, as awesome as the Himalayas which guarded the northern frontiers of his country. With force and violence banished from his life, there needed gentleness, firm and brave, to take their place. Along with this came humility, which was manifest in every quality and action of his life. I used to sit and marvel at Gandhi's wholly unconscious display, to all persons and under all circumstances, of the humble heart. Here was unquestionably the first among the world's great figures—a man who walked with kings and viceroys, who ruled and led the hundreds of millions of his fellow men in India, whose name echoed from the far horizons of the world, who was daily pondering policies which determined the destinies of nations, who influenced the whole range of modern life, who singlehandedly was defying the greatest empire of our time, and triumphantly, without violence or hate or killing, was wresting the freedom of his people from its clutch. And here he was ready to meet and talk, in the spirit of infinite kindliness and good will, with the myriads of common folk who came knocking on his door and begging to see him—a group of students perhaps, a delegation of patriots, a troubled mother and her sick

child, a passing priest or pilgrim, a chance traveler fro America. All of them wanted to kneel before this sprin of living water, and drink, if only a few drops, of i crystal stream. If there was any impatience or wearine in Gandhi's heart, any pride, he did not show it. Ther was only the inexhaustible humility of one who ha dedicated himself to God and his high purposes for me

It was this humility which explained Gandhi's cou tesy, as his gentleness explained his charm. Gandh assumed not the slightest pretension of greatness. H played not at all upon the vast influence which was hi He surrounded himself with no barriers of authorit and circumstance. He was as accessible as a mother t her children, or a friend to a dear friend. Gandhi ha tamed his spirit to absolute obedience. Amid ever temptation to pose and pomp he remained simple, u spoiled, and utterly sincere. His "ways were ways o pleasantness and all [his] paths were peace. [He] was tree of life to them that lay hold upon [him]."

Lord Acton, the great English historian, wrote at lea one immortal saying. "Power tends to corrupt, and abs lute power corrupts absolutely." Of all the men of histor who exercised power in the sense of which Acton wa speaking—political power, military power, persona power—I can think of only three who mark exceptio to this rule. One is Marcus Aurelius, another is Abra ham Lincoln, and the third is Gandhi, these three. An the greatest of these is Gandhi.

IV

No picture of Gandhi would be complete witho some description of his *mise en scène*, more particular the articles which he used in his daily routine.

In London, in 1931, as we have seen, the Mahatm

lived in an East End settlement house, in a room which suggested a prison cell, or the retreat of some simple hermit. When I saw him in New Delhi, in 1947, he was living in the home of Mr. G. D. Birla, one of the richest industrialists in India. The house was spacious, set in the midst of ample grounds, simply but beautifully appointed, and opening, by doors and windows, upon lovely gardens. Gandhi and his household had apparently taken possession of all the first floor. When I met Mr. Birla, he was descending a sweeping staircase from the second floor. Gandhi's room, in which he was destined to die some weeks later, was small, unadorned, chiefly conspicuous for the snow-white pillows and cushions which supported him in the far corner of the room, near the open door.

Gandhi was dressed, when I saw him in London and later in New Delhi, in his famous loin cloth. On the former occasion, London was chilly and wet with frequent rains. Gandhi, as usual, in such weather, wore his *khaddar* shawl drawn loosely about his shoulders. In New Delhi, Gandhi was suffering from a slight bronchial affection, accompanied by a touch of fever, so that, on a hot afternoon, the shawl was wrapped about him. It was reassuring, and a bit amusing, to note his fine scorn of his illness and his constant refusal to be fussed over by his physician and attendants. In the cool of the evening, though troubled with a cough, Gandhi conducted his out-of-door prayer meeting as usual.

A familiar story is told of Gandhi's reception by the King and Queen in Buckingham Palace, while he was in attendance upon the Round Table Conference. It was carefully explained to the Mahatma that this reception was a formal affair and required formal garb—black coat, striped trousers, black shoes, white shirt, collar and

tie. Gandhi's instant reply to this announcement was that he could not wear such clothing even to meet the King. Then it was carefully explained that Gandhi had no choice in the matter—that an invitation from His Majesty, George V, was a command, and must be obeyed. This statement made little impression upon the Mahatma's mind—after prolonged discussion, he remained obdurate in his refusal to don garments which could only make him ridiculous. What actually happened behind the scenes is unknown—in all probability a sensible and gracious King yielded the point in question. In any case, when the hour came, Gandhi was on hand, wearing the same clothing he wore in India to be received by viceroy or peasant. It is said that, at a later time, Gandhi was asked if he did not feel embarrassed to enter such a presence so scantily clad. The Mahatma smiled one of his irresistible smiles, and said No—that the King had on enough clothing for them both!*

If Gandhi taught in this delicious episode the folly of wasting time and energy upon details of clothing, as Jesus taught it in his saying, "Take no thought for your body . . . what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment," so he taught the uselessness of mere possessions, as Jesus taught this also in his colloquy with the rich young man whom he bade to "sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven." Gandhi was the greatest figure of his day, surely the most influential, yet he owned nothing beyond the small array of articles necessary for the maintenance of decent and effective living. When I met him in New Delhi, it was in a house owned and occupied by a friend. So far as Gandhi himself was concerned, "he had not where to lay his head." As I talked with him, I saw

* Set down by Fischer, page 281.

at one side of his couch the spinning wheel which he still used every day. His body required nothing more than the loin cloth and shawl and a pair of sandals. On his nose was a pair of spectacles. At his waist dangled an Ingersoll dollar watch. He had a fountain pen and paper, and a bowl for food. Beyond these things, he may have had a book or two, and surely his staff for walking. This was Gandhi's property! Whatever else he may on occasion have needed was his for the asking of anybody who might at the moment have been nigh. The absence of all valuable possessions was the source of Gandhi's greatest strength. "My enemies can do me no harm," he said, "for I have nothing to lose, as they have nothing to gain." I have often wondered if Gandhi knew, along with two or three other Christian hymns, the one written by Henry Wotton, which ends with the lines

> —This man is freed from servile bands
> Of hope to rise, or fear to fall;
> Lord of himself, though not of lands;
> And having nothing, yet hath all.

V

It was Gandhi and his career which introduced into our language the word *ashram*. This means a village settlement, a school, a hermitage, a retreat—various aspects of co-operative life, lived more or less apart from the world by a group of men and women dedicated to some general or in some cases very concrete cause of human betterment. This idea or practice runs far back in Indian history much as monasticism runs far back in Christian history.

Early in his leadership of the great struggle for national independence Gandhi felt it wise to establish his

own *ashram*, where he might live with his disciples and co-workers in the spirit of mutual helpfulness and supreme dedication to India. He had tried this earlier in South Africa and with success. His first settlement in India he founded at Kochrab, later removed to Sabarmati, just across the Sabarmati River from Ahmedabad, the great industrial center. Here Gandhi took up his abode, making the *ashram* his only home, in company with a varying number of his followers who pledged themselves to the service of their Mahatma. Planting, spinning, weaving, they tried to make the settlement self-sustaining, while Gandhi worked in his cell-like room and morning and evening conducted prayers on a high embankment overlooking the river. Gandhi, of course, was frequently absent on his long trips to various parts of India, and before long there came the intrusion of arrests and imprisonment.

The story of Gandhi's prison life should have an entire book by itself. It is the supreme example of the miracle of weakness made strong and defeat turned into victory. For Gandhi, through his complete immunity from the corruption of materialistic incidents and forces, was able to make a prison sentence a privilege and not a penalty.

When I was in Poona, a city not far distant from Bombay, I was told a story which beautifully illumines this mystery. It seems that Gandhi was walking along the street one day with an English friend. As he was passing by a particularly grim and ugly building, Gandhi stopped, and began patting the walls as though he were caressing them. The friend was at first amused and then bewildered by the performance. "What are you doing, Gandhiji?" he asked. To which inquiry the Mahatma replied, "This is a prison, and I am very fond of it. You

see, this is the first prison in India in which I was ever confined. So when I chance to pass this way, I always stop, and in token of old times, give it my endearing salutation."

How many times Gandhi went to prison, for his repeated political offenses, I do not recall. But he went many times, first in South Africa, and later not infrequently in India, and his sentences, first and last, must have aggregated a long period of years. In this unusual experience Gandhi learned many things which were greatly to his advantage.

Thus, he found that to be held in prison for any length of time was to be relieved of the enormous pressure of duties and responsibilities incident to his leadership of the great movement for India's emancipation, and thus to gain rest of body and refreshment of spirit. In the ordinary routine of his active life, he was all but overwhelmed by the meetings he had to attend and address, the reports and articles and letters he had to write, the unbroken line of visitors he had to receive, the momentous hours of consultation he had to spend with friends and colleagues, the long journeys he had to take, surrounded night and day by excited throngs of people. There was no way of escaping these activities which pertained to the advancement of India's cause. Had he not been a man perfectly disciplined to an appointed way of life—his diet, his exercises of prayer, his one silent day in each week—he would long since have broken down. But at intervals would come arrest and imprisonment. This also, in its own way, was a severe test, no doubt about that! But Gandhi found the secret of transforming this experience of physical restraint into a means of restoring his tired body and restless mind to welcome repose. It was like entering a retreat for medita-

tion and communion with one's own inner self. Few persons find it so, but Gandhi made it so.

Secondly, he found the long hours of prison a not unwelcome opportunity for writing in quiet and without haste. Jawaharlal Nehru had this same experience, on an immensely larger and more impressive scale, in his years behind the bars of English prisons. Thus, it was while he suffered confinement that he wrote his autobiography, *Toward Freedom*, his *Glimpses of World History*, and his *Discovery of India*. On my lecture trip in India in 1947-1948, I used to refer to this astounding fact, and ask my audiences if they realized how much they owed to the British Empire. "If it had not been for Nehru's imprisonment," I would say, "these three literary masterpieces would never have been written. And now that Nehru is free, we shall probably never have another." It was much the same with Gandhi! The Mahatma was no such literary figure as Nehru, and produced no such books as those which sprang from the latter's pen. Indeed, it was one of Gandhi's most ingratiating qualities that he made no claim to such literary distinction as glorified his beloved Jawaharlal. But he wrote voluminously—I wonder if any author, except perhaps Voltaire or Walter Scott, can match him in sheer quantity of production! His style had an admirable clarity, and is invaluable as a record of events and ideas, and as a revelation of personality. But he wrote hurriedly, and at the prompting of the moment. It was only in prison that he obtained a leisure that could be used for the more careful statement of his thought. If this produced no masterpieces, apart from his autobiography, in part a prison product, it at least created a state of mind which strengthened and ennobled him.

Lastly, Gandhi's prison terms were useful in magni-

fying his influence upon the great masses of Indians. This influence was so stupendous, and endured such vicissitudes through so many years, that it is difficult, perhaps inaccurate, to designate one period as greater than another. It is amusing to recall how many times, in the long struggle against the Empire, our American newspapers published dispatches announcing the decline of Gandhi's power, and even on occasion prophesying his passing from the stage of events in India. Evidence of such phenomena never matured, and Gandhi's influence over his people continued at the flood. But if there was a time when the influence was more dominant than another, it was when the revered Mahatma sat quietly in his prison cell, a martyr to India's cause. There was something about the dignity of that patient figure, its unconquerable resolution, its suffering "for others' sake," which stirred and held the adoration of the people. It remains one of the riddles of history that the British authorities, in India as in South Africa, never recognized, or even suspected, this momentous fact.

VI

Ralph Waldo Emerson, in his address on the *Method of Nature* (1841), has this passage:

"There is no attractiveness like that of a new man. . . . A man, a personal ascendency, is the only great phenomenon. When nature has work to be done, she creates a genius to do it. Follow the great man, and you shall see what the world has at heart in these ages. There is no omen like that."

Emerson refers to Napoleon and Chatham as illustrations of his theme. Gandhi is a much better illustration. There has never been anybody quite like the Mahatma

either in presence or in practice. He was unique beyond all that the world has known. When he was needed, he came as a new creation, straight from the hand of God.

This was not manifest in his personal appearance, as it is, for example, in the case of Nehru, whose beauty of person is matched only by the ineffable power of his presence. Gandhi, by comparison, was insignificant, all the more as he deliberately chose to wear the scanty garb of the common people of his country, and thus lost himself, so to speak, in the swarming multitudes about him. Like Socrates, Gandhi had certain awkward, even ugly features of face and frame, which he made no slightest attempt to disguise or hide. But these were straightway transfigured, as we have seen, by the inner grace and outward radiance of his spirit. To see and talk with Gandhi, even for a few hurried moments, was to be overwhelmingly impressed by the gentleness of the man, together with a certain dignity and authority, which gave him, in the single interview or in some great public meeting of the multitudes, supreme command of the situation. As I have already said, there was not the slightest pose or pretension about Gandhi—rather was he so gracious in his manner, so natural in his whole bearing and being, as to put the most sensitive visitor immediately at his ease. Yet was he moved by an inner power which itself was marred by no trace of condescension. Beyond the flesh there was the spirit, which had a regal quality which instantly brought to mind the Buddha, with whom Gandhi has been so frequently compared.

But it is Jesus, be it said in all reverence, who offers truest comparison with Gandhi. Of the personal appearance of the Nazarene we know nothing. He died in his radiant youth, as Gandhi in his still active old age, each

the martyred victim of fanaticism. Both went to the people, and led them in great movements of deliverance from superstition within and oppression without. In both burned the pure and radiant flame of sacrificial love. They lived in spirit and in truth, and showed the way of life.

It is perhaps inevitable in the case of Gandhi, as in that of other great leaders of the spirit, that the process of deification should set in.* Indeed, this strange process had begun before the Mahatma's death. Thus, on my first visit to New Delhi, I went to see the great new Hindu temple reared in that capital city by Mr. Birla as a gift to his fellow religionists. It is an enormous structure, covering a vast area of ground—not so much a single building as an array of buildings, chapels, altars, scattered over a walled-in garden, or park. There are various centers of interest, various deities memorialized and glorified. Suddenly, as I wandered about, I saw something familiar—a bas-relief of Gandhi carved in stone. Looking about me, I found that I was standing in a kind of shrine, a place made sacred for the adoration of the Mahatma. It was an open-air sanctuary, inviting entrance and prayer—and many were the humble men and women and others who came and went, like pilgrims before a cross. Since Gandhi's death, reports have come of similar altars reared in honor of the Mahatma. Deification is not unique with Christianity. It is a practice which springs perennially fresh and beautiful from the universal heart of man—then hardens into dogma!

It is with these, the great and good, geniuses of the spirit, that Gandhi belongs. Yet does he stand solitary among them all. Emerson calls the appearance of such a man an "omen . . . of what the world has at heart." If

* See below, Chapter IX.

so, the advent of Gandhi is a sign that the spirit is not dead, but must in due course come to itself again, to subdue the terror of these times. Man must lay hold upon this spirit, and follow where it leads, if he would survive. Meanwhile, of Gandhi as of Socrates may be spoken the words recorded by Plato, in his dialogue *Phaedo*, of the scene when the master drank the hemlock in the presence of his disciples:

"So passed away our friend, who was, I think, of all living men I have known the best, the wisest and the most just."

CHAPTER V

FAREWELL TO GANDHI

I

I LAST SAW GANDHI on my visit to India in 1947-1948. I went to the Far East, on appointment by an American foundation, to lecture at Indian colleges and universities. When the invitation was received and accepted, and plans for distant traveling were under way, I wrote to the Mahatma about my journey, and asked if I could come and see him. He answered promptly and as follows:

"You have given me not only exciting but welcome news. The news appears to be almost too good to be true, and I am not going to believe it in its entirety unless you are physically in India."

I set sail for India on September 18, 1947, and landed at Bombay, after ten days in London, on Sunday, October 5th. After a week's sojourn in Bombay, I went to New Delhi, and arrived in this lordly city on the morning of Sunday, October 12. I was taken at once to the home of Dr. S. S. Bhatnagar, one of the great scientists of our contemporary world, high in the counsels of Jawaharlal Nehru, Prime Minister. There I was told that the Mahatma had arranged to see me that very afternoon.

The situation in New Delhi, which had been engulfed by the fierce fires of war between India and Pakistan, was still frightening. It was a city marked by the scars, and seared by the horrors of civil strife. Only

a few days before, violence had run wild, leaving hundreds of dead and wounded in the streets and squares. The city had been placed under martial law. The house where I was staying was guarded night and day by armed sentinels. Following hard upon the fighting had come the flood of refugees, hundreds of thousands of them, Moslems flowing north and Hindus south through Delhi in quest of safety. Then Gandhi had come, as he had earlier come to Calcutta under like conditions, and worked his spiritual miracle of pacification. The city, in his presence and under his influence, was quiet again. The people high and low, residents and refugees, Moslems and Hindus, had put their trust in the Mahatma, as in no other living man. The government was ruling with a strong hand under Nehru's heroic and resourceful control, but looking to Gandhi for ultimate decisions. There was everywhere the conviction that with Gandhi peace had come, and would remain. Yet the shock of what had so suddenly and terribly happened had created an inward tension which easily exploded into alarm.

I remember a trivial yet trying incident which took place one evening in Dr. Bhatnagar's home. We had finished a late dinner, and were sitting in the living room, when suddenly the electric lights went out. I thought nothing of it—a fuse had blown out, or some little accident had taken place at the central powerhouse! But my host saw more serious possibilities. What if some mob had broken loose and turned the city into darkness as a preliminary to looting and killing? Was Nehru's house across the way in blackness too? What about the street lights? It was an anxious company which sat in quiet, talking instinctively in whispers, and waiting for something to happen. To the end I could not seem to take the matter seriously. But I had not been

through what these people had endured. I could only imagine, rather feebly, their instant fear, and their relief when the room was alight again.

If New Delhi was under control, the countryside round about was still uncertain. For example! We had secured reservations on the morning express for Agra, to see the Taj Mahal, and to give a scheduled lecture at the University. On coming to the breakfast table on Wednesday, Dr. Bhatnagar greeted me with the cry, "Well, I'm afraid you won't get through to Agra tomorrow." "Why, what's the matter," I said. He handed me the morning newspaper, and pointed to an account of an attack upon the Agra Express the day before. There had been burning and violence, and several passengers had been killed or wounded. Later in the day came a message from Agra canceling the lecture. The trip was off!

II

It was under such conditions as these, marking a supreme crisis in his life and India, that Gandhi, in the kindliness of his spirit, arranged an appointment on the very day of my arrival, at the precise hour of four o'clock in the afternoon. On the very tick of this hour, for I remembered Gandhi's extreme emphasis on punctuality, I was at Birla House. The door from the street was wide open, and I entered without ceremony, or any particular attention on the part of several secretaries or attendants who were moving about, and of one or two native newspapermen who were squatting on the threshold. Everything was easy and informal and marvelously quiet. But I soon found I was expected, and was taken without a moment's delay to Gandhi's room at the far end of the hallway on the main floor.

Gandhi was sitting cross-legged upon his linen-covered cushions placed comfortably upon the floor. He had given instructions that I should not be asked to remove my shoes, according to custom, since I would be more at my ease if I did not think of them at all. On seeing me, he extended his right hand, in smiling welcome, and seized my hand in the warm clasp which was the familiar gesture of my country and not of his. Then, without a word, he beckoned me to a chair placed close in front of him, and asked me to sit down.

Vincent Sheean in his account, in his *Lead, Kindly Light*, of his first meeting with Gandhi, makes a good deal of this chair.* He insisted upon sitting on the floor near to Gandhi, though the Indian knew that the American was uncomfortable and repeated his invitation to take the chair. But Sheean declined again.

> "You should not be sitting there," [Gandhi] said. "You should have a chair."
>
> "No, sir, please," I said. . . .
>
> The question of the chair came up twice more, I think, as he imagined me to be uncomfortable on the floor. As a matter of fact, I did begin to get a bit cramped before the end, but I could never have admitted it. The idea of sitting on a chair, with Mr. Gandhi on the floor at my feet, was something impossible for me to conceive. I was finally obliged to tell him that I did not want a chair, and after that he abandoned the notion.

I read this account with great respect, but must confess that in the same situation, I did not feel as Sheean did. Indeed, I do not recall that I thought of the matter at all. I sat down on the chair as naturally, and unthinkingly, as I took Gandhi's extended hand when he

* See p. 184.

greeted me with this Western gesture instead of the Indian gesture of the two hands joined palm to palm upon the breast. This chair was no throne, or seat of authority. To occupy it in Gandhi's presence indicated no pride or pretension. It was simply a way of sitting in comfort instead of discomfort. The Mahatma and I did not discuss the matter, but proceeded with the business of the occasion.

One thought smote me with astonishment on this visit, and has lingered with me since. I refer to the fact that, as I looked upon Gandhi in New Delhi, I seemed to see the same man I had earlier seen in London in 1931. Seventeen years had passed since that first meeting, and they had apparently not touched the Mahatma at all. Oh yes—his hair had whitened, and retreated farther back from the broad and open brow. But I could see no wrinkles, nor looseness of the flesh. He walked more slowly, with a step which had lost its quick and lithe response. But his strength was quite unexhausted, as witness his pilgrimage into Bengal, to stay the uprisings and the violent fighting in that unhappy region. Certainly he appeared the same, apart from unimportant aspects of face and body. As I talked with him, I could feel that it was only the day before that I had been with him at Kingsley Hall, and that all the years between had been rolled back and were now as though they had never been. Here was a man who had mastered the regimen of life—had broken the barriers of the flesh, and entered already into the pure realm of the spirit. Gandhi had been quoted as promising his disciples that he would live to be a hundred and twenty-five years old. I had taken this to be an expansive statement of the Mahatma's continuing good health, already extraordinary for a man of seventy-eight living constantly

in the midst of alarms. What was my astonishment when I heard one of the outstanding public leaders of India, governor of a great province, a man of high intelligence and unimpeachable character, declare in all seriousness that he believed that, barring accidents, Gandhi would survive to precisely that great age. Having seen Gandhi, who was I to doubt?

As I think back to this meeting with Gandhi, I cannot recall the details of our discussion, nor did I make any notes. My chief memory is of the warmth of Gandhi's greeting at the start, and at the end my insistence upon leaving before my hour was up, lest I trespass upon the Mahatma's precious time. Our talk was informal and personal. I told him of my projected traveling and lecturing in India, and sought his good advice as to the wisdom or unwisdom of my plans. I had in my hands some letters and papers from American pacifists, bearing upon an international peace conference to be held in India at a not distant date in the future, and asked permission to leave the documents with him, and invited him to be present. I told him of some prepared food I had brought with me for distribution—could he receive it and place it where it was most needed? We agreed that the refugee crisis was at this moment most urgent, especially here in New Delhi where the two tides of frightened and homeless humans from south and north were meeting in a kind of flood which was threatening to inundate the city, and were dying, many of them, from starvation. Gandhi was pleased when I proposed that the food should be divided equally between Hindus fleeing from Pakistan and Moslems fleeing from India. Right here was the tinder which blazed a few weeks later into the pistol shots which took the Mahatma's life.

I suppose it was inevitable that all this should lead to some references to the horror of fire and sword which had swept like a conflagration that very part of India where we this day were meeting. From the beginning of our talk, I was conscious of a kind of darkness upon us. In spite of the blazing afternoon sun and the warmth and radiance of the Mahatma's welcome, there was this cloud which rested upon us all. Especially upon Gandhi, who was sad in countenance and spirit beyond all expectation or imagining. This was shown in his voice, which had not a trace of that merry ring, so characteristic of him, but was now muted, so that I sometimes had difficulty in hearing his words. The shadow of recent and current events lay heavily upon his soul. Conscious of this, and in the sincerely earnest desire not to add to the burden of sorrow which lay so heavily upon him, but rather to lighten it if possible, I tried to keep away from Pakistan and partition. But as by some magnetic influence, I was led thereto.

Thus, I found myself asking Gandhi where he was going after he left New Delhi. Perhaps I might meet him again, or even travel with him, on my lecture trip which would take me into all parts of India in the next three months.

This was a leading question which I regretted as soon as it was spoken. But Gandhi, in his forthright way, did not try to avoid it, but rose to it, and thus turned our discussion definitely to this theme. His voice was now as clear as tones of music. He must remain in New Delhi, he said, until the situation there was secure. There must be no uncertainty or fear, least of all any hate! Especially for the sake of the refugees in the city, there must be true accord, and thus a restoration of normal living. Then, when this work of appeasement and reconcilia-

tion was done, "I shall go," he said, "to Pakistan." This startled me, as Pakistan was the blazing center of violent outbreak. But just for this reason he must go there. Not even the fact that Pakistan was now a foreign country, and held a predominantly Mohammedan population, could be allowed to interfere with his determination. God had spoken, and his servant must obey.

It was during this discussion that Gandhi first made clear to me, as he had to others, that he had always been opposed to partition. This policy meant disunity, and was thus a patent denial of all that he had been preaching and practicing throughout his life. Also, more than any other Indian, he foresaw and feared the violence that broke forth upon the land. If he had been opposed to partition in the beginning, how much more so now when its consequences had suddenly become so terrible? Yet partition was established, and what could he do but devote himself to the spiritual healing of a political breach? So he sought to extinguish the searing flames wherever they appeared, to bring Moslems and Hindus together by the power of his own example of love and pity, and thus to make India to be one again. His sadness sprang from the horror of this tragic episode, and from his first conviction that this whole great tragedy marked the collapse and final failure of the mission to which he had given his very life. I have already stated what I did to try to correct this egregious error, which had its origin in Gandhi's long-standing habit of taking upon himself the responsibility of the sins of other men and doing penance for them. That I succeeded, in any considerable measure, in clearing Gandhi's mind of this sense of guilt and self-immolation, I dare not believe. The whole vast catastrophe had eaten too deep into his soul to be easily removed. Only the restoration of peace and

good will over all the land, in witness of the unconquerable purposes of God, could bring him the assurance he had lost. The logic of events and not the arguments of men, above all his own unconquerable faith, must prove anew the truth. Already this logic was at work in the slow but sure turning of the distraught people to the leader whom they had momentarily betrayed. Meanwhile it comforted me that Gandhi presently published my statement in *Harijan*, his weekly paper, and confessed the prayerful wish that it might be so.

III

It was this same evening that we attended Gandhi's prayer meeting which he held daily at six o'clock. At a distance of some fifty or more yards across the lawns and gardens of Birla House, a low platform had been reared. This was covered with pillows and cushions, that the Mahatma might be comfortable and at ease during the service. A background of trees and shrubs, setting off a kind of pagodalike structure, gave the impression of an out-of-door auditorium for audience and speaker. As we had arrived somewhat early, we were taken behind the screen of foliage to see the amplifying system, and the places reserved for singers and readers.

More interesting, to me at least, were the people, slowly gathering in the dusk of evening. They seemed to come from various directions, some hurriedly, others more slowly and quietly. They were not examined or watched in any way. I do not remember seeing any policemen or ushers! The early comers squatted or sat cross-legged on the ground. Row after row of them sat closely together, some talking in whispers, most sitting silent and very still. At the rear, and on both sides, stood a constantly increasing crowd of onlookers. That night

there must have been some four or five hundred people in attendance.

The character of the men, women, and even children waiting for Gandhi was impressive. We stood, or walked about, to see the audience at close range, and from every point of view. The variety of persons present that night was remarkable, and not unrepresentative of India. Here were Moslems and Hindus, and Sikhs with their fierce black beards and close-fitting turbans. Soldiers in uniform were present, including a few English officers. Many of the people were poor, like beggars upon the street. Others looked prosperous, not out of place at Birla House. Some were obviously foreigners, like ourselves. Many of the people had never attended these services before; others seemed familiar with the surroundings, knew where to go and how to act; all of them were reverent, but expectant and excited. In a few moments, they were to look upon the Presence!

Suddenly, there came from the loud-speakers an announcement. As it was spoken in native tongue, I could not understand what was said, and my friends, in their translations, seemed not quite to agree. There was no question that the announcement was of Gandhi's intention to have some Mohammedan material, reading or song, in his service that night. Did anyone object? If so, it might be wise, in deference to these, not to have any service. Is this what was said? I am not sure! But it was foolish to speculate, as there were apparently no objectors, and the service would proceed.

Sharp at the appointed hour, Gandhi appeared in the far portico of Birla House. He was walking slowly, leaning upon the shoulders of two young girls, his grandnieces. As he moved toward the dais, the audience was seized as by an electric current. With the exception of

a few on the outskirts of the crowd, who ran to meet him on his way, nobody moved or spoke. It seemed as though everybody were caught up in a kind of inward ecstasy which sought no outward expression save in the awe which seemed to possess them all. As Gandhi came to his place and sat down cross-legged upon the cushions, the audience stirred as though touched by some passing breeze, and the silence was broken by a kind of murmur or sigh. But there was no speaking or calling. Gandhi was himself utterly quiet, as though wrapped within himself. He was heavily swathed about his shoulders and chest, for that afternoon he had not been well.

As we waited together, speaker and audience, there came suddenly from the loud-speakers a burst of song—fresh young voices of boys and girls, sometimes in unison, sometimes in antiphonal response. The singing continued for what seemed to me to be an unduly long period, but the listeners were intent and reverent. As I could not understand the native tongue, I did not know whether I was hearing Hindu or Moslem song. As the music died away, there came silence again. Then the Mahatma's voice, so low and gentle that I could hardly hear the tones. I think he read or recited words of prayer in the beginning, but he was soon speaking a message which would be published the next morning in every newspaper in the land. It was whispered to me that he was talking about the refugees, who were crowding into New Delhi in uncontrollable streams, and appealing for help on their behalf. He reminded his hearers that the chill weather of autumn was at hand, and there was need therefore for clothing as well as food. I have no doubt that he spoke equally for Moslems and Hindus in their misery, and pleaded for help for both groups.

As the Mahatma continued, the deep shadows of

evening began to fall. Sunset and darkness in the Orient are very different from what they are in the West. We are used to the slow descent of the sun—the lingering glory of gorgeous and ever-changing color in the western sky. The first touch of nightfall comes several hours before the day has gone and light shines only in the stars. But what is a matter of hours with us is hardly more than as many minutes in the East. "I am gone like the shadow when it declineth," writes the Psalmist. Which means that he is gone all at once, and the darkness come! So it was at this meeting—in an instant, so it seemed, the scene had gone, and there was nothing left but Gandhi's white garb and the even rise and fall of his voice, which now seemed to fade away rather than to stop. I would find it hard to tell when the meeting was over, and I have no recollection of when or how Gandhi departed. I was simply conscious suddenly that the Mahatma had gone as though snatched into heaven, and that the audience was dispersing. I heard rather than saw their passing in the darkness, as I made my way to the street and sought Dr. Bhatnagar's car.

I wondered that night, and wonder still, if I had not seen something closely akin to Jesus and the people of ancient Palestine. Did not the Nazarene speak in this public and yet personal way to the men and women who gathered about him and heard him gladly? Jesus at times addressed vast multitudes, just as Gandhi did. But he liked most, I am persuaded, to talk quietly to the people, many or few, who chanced to come to him and listen to his word. These gatherings must have been as various and as devout as this which I had seen at the Mahatma's feet. In the swift-falling shadows, that night in New Delhi, I seemed in Gandhi to find, for the first time in my life, a true knowledge and understanding of Jesus.

IV

My last meeting with Gandhi was brief, hurried, unsatisfactory, and yet to me a benediction.

I was in great confusion in New Delhi as to what to do. The public disorders made traveling difficult and dangerous. In many cases the universities where I was to lecture were closed during this uncertain period of violence and massacre. It seemed as though I were caught, as in a trap, with nothing to do but wait. All this was terribly disappointing. I thought for a time of abandoning my trip and going home. Then suddenly everything was changed. I was to go to South India, where there was no trouble, and do my lecturing there—then return and look about and see what might be possible here in the north, where conditions were already improving. So I must leave for Bombay at once, then make my way straight to Bangalore, Mysore, and Madras.

Quickly, as though under inspiration, I decided to go to Birla House, and wait there until there came some happy interval when I might see the Mahatma if only for a moment snatched between two interviews. In the blazing heat of early afternoon, I made my way to the house, and entered without interference or even inquiry. Fortune was with me, for who was this coming down the hall but Mirabehn. I told her at once of my predicament, that I was leaving and must see Gandhi, and besought her help. She smiled assurance, placed me in a small reception room, and went off to make inquiries. She was soon returned with the message that Gandhi was sleeping—his regular afternoon nap. But he was due to awaken at any moment, and I could then see him at once.

We sat together and talked—some fifteen minutes,

perhaps. Then came the summons, and I was in Gandhi's presence again. It was all very simple and unimportant. I told him I must say good-by—explained the long journey before me. I might be back, and then again I might not. I shall not forget how Gandhi took my hand and, with his old smile of loving-kindness, urged me to arrange things so that I might come again. I said, Yes—if circumstances did not forbid. Which is just what circumstances did in this case! I did not see him again. This was my last farewell.

What if I could have looked ahead! Would I have lingered, or later forced circumstances to bend to my demand? I doubt it. I was in India on a mission which I was charged to fulfill. The difficulties in my way were many and serious. I must use my utmost of time and strength to overcome them, and accomplish what I had crossed half the world to do. As for prolonging this last interview with the Mahatma, I had no right to do that. I was intruding upon Gandhi's pressing duties, and thus under obligation to leave with proper promptitude. I hope that I would have done just this. But the heartbreak would have been unbearable.

I often wonder that there was so little anticipation of Gandhi's death. When people in dismay of the future would say to me that anything might happen in India today, the final disaster waiting upon any chance event, I would say, "What, for example?" And they would say, "Why, Nehru might be shot," or "Gandhi might die of some latest fast." But I do not recall ever hearing anybody suggest that Gandhi might be shot, or otherwise assassinated. His sanctity had won immunity from violence! No hand could or would be raised against him. But it was just this which shook the world, like some cosmic earthquake, when Gandhi died.

CHAPTER VI

DEAD—AND AFTER

I

IT WAS A FEW MINUTES after nine o'clock, on the morning of Friday, January 30, 1948. I had returned from India and was in my study, examining the mail. Suddenly there came a sharp ringing of the telephone, and the voice of one excitedly declaring that Gandhi was dead. At first I could not seem to understand. Gandhi dead? I telephoned the information bureau of the *New York Times* and made inquiry. The answer came back crisp and clear. "Yes, Gandhi is dead. He was shot last evening." "But is he *dead*," I asked again, finding it impossible to believe that the Mahatma could die. The reply was definite and unhesitating. Gandhi was dead!

I stood as though in a daze, unable even to think. I seemed paralyzed, and did not move. Slowly, like coming out of the ether on an operating table, I recovered consciousness. I spoke to my secretary. I thought of my wife. I ran to her in an agony of spirit. Then, when I saw her and heard her speak as though from a great distance, a strange thing happened. I began to cry, and found, to my amazement and alarm, that I could not stop.

Jane Addams writes in the pages of her autobiography, *Twenty Years at Hull House*, in remembrance of the day when she saw her father break down and cry when he heard of the death of Abraham Lincoln. She records

that this made a profound impression upon her, for up to that time she had thought that only children cried.*

Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, in her autobiographical volume, *This Is My Story*, reports the one occasion, in the early days of her husband's illness, when she suddenly broke down. The house was crowded. Excitement was in the air. She was reading to her two youngest boys, when she found herself sobbing and unable to continue the story. Only when she retired to another room and wrestled with herself did she regain her masterful control.†

It was something of this kind of experience that I suffered when Gandhi died. Later on I was comforted by the discovery that others had been stricken in much the same way. At a memorial service held at the Community Church in New York on the Sunday following his death, most of the congregation were in tears. Louis Fischer, in his biography *The Life of Mahatma Gandhi*, in commenting upon the death of the Mahatma, indulged in no mere figure of speech when he wrote, "Just an old man in a loin cloth in distant India. Yet when he died, humanity wept."

What is the secret of this emotional reaction on Gandhi's assassination? Why did millions of people the world around, most of whom had never seen Gandhi and knew little of his life, give way to sobs and cries as though at the passing of their own beloved? One can understand why in India, in the remotest village as in the capital city of New Delhi where Gandhi fell, the multitudes intimately mourned the death of one whom they had learned to call Bapu. When, in city and town alike, the Indian bus drivers and their passengers, moved by a common impulse when they heard of the assas-

* See Jane Addams's *Twenty Years at Hull House*, p. 23.

† See Mrs. Roosevelt's *This Is My Story*, p. 339.

sination, left their busses just where they chanced to be, and sought their homes that they might join their families in weeping and wailing for one who had long since possessed their hearts, it seemed quite natural. What else would one expect? But outside of India there was no man in all the world more alien, so it seemed, to the accepted ways of life, than Gandhi. His loin cloth might be taken as a symbol of idiosyncrasies which shut him off from the understanding and hence the sympathies of other men. Yet when he died, it was found that he had entered and conquered every heart. Never in history has one man been so deeply and sincerely mourned by so many other men. For a single swift-flying moment, in Gandhi's death, humanity was made one.

What is the explanation, I ask again, of this great wave of grief that swept around the world?

II

I doubt if there is any thoroughly satisfactory answer to this question. Louis Fischer, in his biography, speaks of "the millions in all countries [who] mourned Gandhi's death, and did not quite know why." One never knows why. But what was confusion at the moment may become clearer with passing time. It has been five years now since Gandhi fell, and we should begin to understand.

First, I am sure, was the sense of shock at "the deep damnation of his taking off." Gandhi's death was so unnecessary, and so terrible! That he, of all men the world around, should have been stricken by the hand of violence! Of course there was dramatic fitness in the decree of fate that the Mahatma should go this way. In this, as in similar instances of history, we see violence and hate striking desperately at the simple goodness which they have most to fear, and winning, in their own

condemnation, the final sanctification of what they would destroy. That instantaneous moment of death, the pistol shot on the one hand and Gandhi's gesture of forgiveness on the other, disclosed with the vividness of a lightning flash the whole stupendous drama of Gandhi's career. It completed and glorified the whole. But it takes time and a calm imagination to see this basic significance of Gandhi's passing. What we need for sober judgment of this, as of the whole tragic story of mankind, is objectivity, and this comes only with the perspective of the years. Meanwhile, in that instant experience of hearing of Gandhi's death by violence there was the shock of which I have spoken. And shock moves easily to helpless tears. Nehru, when he announced over the radio the ghastly news, was convulsed with grief which he found it well-nigh impossible to control.

Secondly, in our passion of tears for Gandhi, was our sense of loss, of irreparable loss, in the sudden passing of so great a man. This was felt most poignantly in India, which had long since come to organize its life about the Mahatma, and direct its energies under his guidance. This must have been an emotion strong within the soul of Nehru, the Prime Minister, who had for years made no vital decision without first laying the problem before Gandhi, when, bathed in tears, he summoned all India, with the light gone out in darkness, still to carry on. But how could the Indians carry on, with their beloved Bapu, for so long the beating heart of the nation, lying "cold and dead"?

> My captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still;
> My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will.

Before the people of India there loomed tasks more complex and difficult, or so it seemed, than those which had

been triumphantly met and overcome under Gandhi's leadership, in the heroic struggle for *Swaraj*. They had faced them unafraid because Gandhi was with them and would find the way. But now he was gone. They were alone. How could they continue? It seemed too much to expect, to dare even to try. And so the people, driven to tasks greater than their strength could bear, broke down like children, and cried in the sheer anguish of their souls.

What was true of India was true as well in lesser degree, though in wider range, of the world at large. For among mankind, as among his fellow countrymen, the Mahatma had become a deliverer.

Here was a world society which, as truly as that of pagan Rome, placed its ultimate reliance upon force—material, mechanical, military force. This was contrary to Christianity, which was professed as the accepted religion of this society. But through centuries of barbaric practice, so-called Christian civilization had built a society of its own which recognized and reverenced nothing as an ultimate but physical force. On the one hand, Christ was worshiped in this society with all sorts of pious obeisances; on the other hand was Caesar obeyed with a rigor which developed its own doctrine and discipline. Now, in this our time, was this physical force, more particularly in its militaristic form, turning back upon itself, in a veritable paroxysm of self-destruction. War was become our one final method of settling international disputes and rivalries, and now, in its terrifying contemporary developments, in tanks and airplanes and submarines and atom bombs, was proving fatal alike to friend and foe. When a war was done, it had become increasingly difficult to distinguish victor from vanquished, and all but impossible to make a peace which would endure. On this road lurk doom and death, only

to be escaped by taking another road. And what could this be but the road of the spirit? In the fears and confusions of this hour, there seems to be nothing clear but the conviction that the salvation of society rests in a resolute return to religion—a religion which recognizes love as the law of life, brotherhood as the goal of all human endeavor, and God as the divine motive force of action. "Not by power, nor by might, but by my spirit, saith the Lord."

It was in this awful crisis in human affairs that Gandhi appeared with his uncompromising doctrine of nonviolence—or nonresistance, to use the inaccurate but more familiar Christian phrase. Gandhi brought a magnificent repudiation, in absolutist terms, of all the martial force upon which civilization ironically relies, not so much, now, for victory in battle as for sheer survival in the life struggle itself. But the Mahatma's doctrine was by no means merely negative. It had its supremely positive side in what he called *Satyagraha*, or soul force. There is a power within, said Gandhi, which is greater far than all the power of mere mechanical or physical force. This power is Spirit, the presence of God in the soul of man, the divine mystery of love, in action, if we will have it so, to still the fear and heal the hate of men. If we humans are not spiritual beings, armed with the spirit to do the works of the spirit, then what are we better than beasts of the field or of the jungle,

> . . . red in tooth and claw
> With ravine.

This was the gospel which Gandhi spoke, and which he proved, by his own heroic example, to be not only an ideal but also a practicable way of life. And he proved this not only for individual men, or groups of men, as

we have seen, but for the great masses of mankind. This was Gandhi's unique and transcendent contribution to history, first in South Africa and later in India. With utter courage, he carried through to its ultimate conclusions the logic of the spirit; and, with supreme genius, wrought out the ways and means, the devices and disciplines, of making it work. What he did was to find the pragmatic and moral "equivalent" of war and violent revolution, and therewith was he prepared to save the race from ruin, degradation and death. Then, without warning, in the moment of triumph, when a desperate world most needed counsel and comfort, Gandhi was dead! To see his limp body lying inert upon the ground, stricken by the madness of fanaticism, was more than humanity could bear. What wonder that men everywhere, in an agony of frustration and despair, gave way to tears!

But this is not all! There was a more personal and intimate cause for our lamentation over Gandhi. It is best disclosed by a reminder of how the Mahatma grew upon us through the years. In the beginning, a generation ago, Gandhi was almost unknown outside the borders of his native land and imperialistic centers of British rule, or known only as a queer sort of person who was doing extraordinarily queer things with his fellow countrymen in India. Here was a man who strode the countryside clad only in a loin cloth, barefooted or sandal-shod, and leaning on a pilgrim's staff. A man who lived by choice among the poorest of the poor of the common people of his land! A man who actually taught, in naïve sincerity, the crazy doctrine of nonviolence! A demagogue who challenged the mightiest empire on earth, on behalf of freedom of India, with no weapon available except nonviolent nonco-operation. Winston Churchill called

him, in derision and contempt, a "half-naked fakir," and the world laughed loud in merriment. This was only a few years ago!

Then slowly, as the years went by, this strange man began to grow and, like a mountain emerging from clouds of mists, to dominate the landscape of our world. Men came to recognize in him a formidable leader who was liberating four hundred millions of his countrymen from the armed tyranny of alien rule; and this in an unprecedented and unparalleled war which made no resort to force, violence, and bloodshed. Patience, unconquerable good will, and resolve not to inflict suffering but to endure it, these were Gandhi's only weapons, which as wielded by his people, under his leadership, wrote a new chapter in history. What wonder that we came to recognize this man, and then gradually, and somewhat to our own surprise, to reverence him as a saint and hero. But it was only when we lost him that we discovered the deeps within us not so much of reverence as of unashamed personal affection. "We loved [him] because he first loved us." In India, of course, the people were long since bound to Gandhi with an unutterable devotion. They held him in their hearts as a member of their family, or caste. One day I repeated to a distinguished Indian leader the report of an American newspaperman that he had found remote villages, and villages not so remote, where the people had never heard of Gandhi. The Indian smiled quietly and said, "I wonder if he asked these people if they knew Bapu." It was thus that we also came to love him—and to weep when he fell beneath the assassin's bullet.

It was not so much Gandhi's greatness as it was his personality which won the world. Everyone who came into his presence felt and caught the contagion of his

spirit. Then, as they left him and went their way, they carried with them, to be caught by other men, this inspiration to which no man was immune. I can think of only one conspicuous exception, that of Mr. Jinnah, who remained impervious to Gandhi's influence to the very end. Mingled with this magnetism, if I may call it such, was the irresistible gaiety which swept with laughter over the ironies and innocencies of life. Basic was his simplicity and complete sincerity—the same to all, whether king or peasant, rajah or beggar, Hindu, Moslem, or Englishman. Instinctively men knew that they could trust Gandhi as their very own. In the case of multitudes the world around, in India and elsewhere, Gandhi became an intimate part of their lives. To think of him was a delight, to love him was an exaltation, to obey him was a privilege. So he moved everywhere among friends. Few and far between were the doors and hearts which remained closed to his approach. Then suddenly, in a pistol flash, the Mahatma was dead. Inarticulate, most of us, we wept together, and wondered if life was now worth living with Gandhi gone.

III

But was Gandhi, Gandhiji, Bapu—was he really gone? Not if we interpret life as the Mahatma interpreted it! He is among us still. We can feel his presence as Tennyson felt the presence of that

> . . . living will that shall endure
> When all that seems shall suffer shock,
> Rise in the spiritual rock,
> Flow thro' our deeds and make them pure.

After the pistol and the pyre, the wide-scattering of the ashes in the tides of the sacred river, all the stupen-

dous ceremonialism which attracted millions to Gandhi's bier in the quenchless flames, the Mahatma abides in all that portion of his being, the spirit, which he himself counted of importance.

Thus, in India he remains, and will ever remain, the center of a nation's life. For centuries yet to come, the chronology of the land will be dated "before Gandhi" and "after Gandhi." A whole vast period of Indian history came to a close with the advent of the Mahatma, and another and vaster period began. So all ends and begins with him! Nor is this eternal marking of time a mere system of measurement imposed upon the marching of the stars. It is as well the marking of a way of life. For as long as India lasts, her history will be the tale of a mass endeavor to match the standard of Gandhi's principles and practice. Already the slump has come. The government and people of India are this day doing things which Gandhi would deplore. The execution of his assassin, for example. In the case of Gandhi, in other words, as in the case of other prophets, there will come the hardening of life into conformities and corruptions which the prophet himself would never recognize. Always there will be the tendency, as now, to slip back into conventional and ancient ways. But Gandhi's quiet influence will still pervade the scene, and lift men to levels that they have not known. The Mahatma can no more be defeated in death than he was in life. Truth will conquer in his name.

In one of the closing passages of Plato's *Apology of Socrates*, spoken by the great Athenian after his trial, conviction and sentencing to death, he refers to some of the heroes whom he may expect to meet in the world to come.

> If [death] is a journey to another land [says the great teacher], if what some say is true and all the dead are really there, if this is so, my judges, what greater good could there be? If a man were to go to the House of Death, and leave all these self-styled judges, to find the true judges there . . . Minos and Radamanthus, Aeacus and Triptolemus, and all the sons of the gods who have done justly in this life, would that journey be ill to take? Or to meet Orpheus and Musaeus, Hesiod and Homer, what would you give for that, any of you? . . . And for me especially it would be a wonderful life there, if I meet Palamedes, and Ajax, the son of Telamon, or any of the men of old who died by an unjust decree. To compare my experience with theirs would be full of pleasure.

However it may be in the next life, in which Gandhi, as a devout Hindu, so firmly believed, it is true already in this life that the Mahatma is with his own. The minds of men, by a kind of consent, have enrolled him among the immortals.

There are two ideas of immortality. There is the one spoken of by Socrates as "another land . . . and all the dead are really there." This is the immortality which is a part of our religious faith. It may, or may not, be true. On the one hand, it has been affirmed by most of the greatest thinkers and noblest characters of history. It is one of the basic concepts of human thought. It seems to many of us to belong to the very texture of our consciousness. Without it this texture falls apart, and our minds become a tangle of denial. On the other hand, there is no certain evidence of survival after death. The poet has reminded us that no traveler has ever returned to tell us of this eternal bourne. No communication has ever been received to silence doubt and establish such

conviction as that attaching to certain scientific postulates. For myself, I am content to go along with Gandhi —and Socrates!—and believe in the idea of life beyond the grave.

But there is another immortality—that which inheres here rather than in the great beyond. This has been called the immortality of influence. This means the perpetuation after death of the influence we have exerted during life. We are remembered for our example of character and conduct, and thus become of

> . . . those immortal dead who live again
> In minds made better by their presence.

These minds may be few in number—a husband or wife, a child, an associate, a neighbor, a loving friend—in which case our immortality will not extend very far. In due course these minds will one by one pass away and our memory fade away into the unknown, and we remain no longer as a distinct and separate individuality but only as a part of that eternal whole which constitutes the enduring spiritual realm. But some there are who are in themselves such intense personalities, whose influence reaches so far, and touches the perimeters of so many lives, that they take on a genuine immortality. They are a memory which is passed on from generation to generation as an infinitely precious treasure which enriches and glorifies the race. And they are more than a memory! They are presences which seem to gather strength with an ever-growing purity and power, and distribute it as a powerhouse distributes light. As the ages pass, even these enter upon oblivion. They betray the attributes of mortality. But there are a chosen few who, like the fixed stars, shine on forever, and among them now, the great Mahatma!

Instantly, upon his sudden death, Gandhi joined the small company of the prophets, saviors, and servants of mankind. It is curious that those whom we most love and reverence as the supreme spiritual leaders of the race have lived in remote places and earlier times, and perhaps have been worshiped the more awesomely on this account. But Gandhi lived among us, in our time and in our world. He walked and talked with us. It was the visitation of the holy spirit once again, to reassure us and give us strength. In a world stricken by catastrophe, rent and torn by violence, shaken in its standards of truth and honor, reeling to ruin and a new dark age, there suddenly appeared this figure, all light and love. In his presence we took hope again, and in his life and death found faith to carry on. Man, after all, was not to be snuffed out like a "brief candle," but from whatsoever pain and passion, rise up to life anew.

Gandhi is our pledge to the future of physical and spiritual survival. When all else is forgotten or indifferently remembered of this age, when its resplendent names of king and conqueror are dimmed even as their bodies are turned to dust, Gandhi will still be "a burning and shining light." This time will be recorded as the time of the Mahatma, as, amid a welter of Roman emperors and soldiers, the first century is recorded as the time of Christ. Men will misunderstand him, and fail him, and betray him. But the spirit will none the less live on, the ideal endure, and in the end achieve the victory.

CHAPTER VII

THE WIDER FELLOWSHIP

I

THOMAS CARLYLE, in his *Heroes and Hero Worship*, has this to say:

> Great Men, taken up in any way, are profitable company. We cannot look, however imperfectly, upon a great man, without gaining something by him. He is the living light-fountain, which it is good and pleasant to be near. The light which enlightens, which has enlightened the darkness of the world, and this not as a kindled lamp only, but rather as a natural luminary shining by the gift of Heaven; a flowing light-fountain, as I say, of native original insight, of manhood and heroic nobleness—in whose radiance all souls feel that it is well with them!

There is no estimating the number of human beings whom Gandhi influenced, directly or indirectly, during the long period of his life. Among the hundreds of millions of people in India, there were only a scanty few whose lives he did not touch. Hindus, Moslems, and Parsees, high and low, rich and poor, villagers and city folk, all the seething masses knew him, loved him, and adored him. Outside of India, in countries east and west, he passed easily and effectively into the hearts of multitudes. How universally pervasive his influence was we did not realize till his sudden death stirred all the world to lamentation. As he moved out horizontally to

the farthest bounds of earth, so he moved vertically to the topmost tip of the social scale. Thus, at one time or another, he met with kings, rajahs, and viceroys, and, at the same time, lived, moved, and had his being among the poor and outcast in the lowest depths. In both ranks he was at ease, and left behind a mystic presence which was as potent as it was benign. A great man in the Carlylean sense, the Mahatma was a "living light-fountain, which it [was] good and pleasant to be near."

II

The intensity of Gandhi's feeling, the radiance of his spirit, are best seen in the character of his disciples and followers. Mahadev Desai, for example, Gandhi's secretary and adviser, who died in 1943, at fifty years of age. Gandhi was as inconsolable at his death as though he had lost a son. How to live without him was a problem. For nearly a quarter of a century, Desai had been his closest companion and helper. In conducting a correspondence and contacts which included all the world, Desai was indispensable. He early fell into the habit of answering Gandhi's letters with his own hand and presenting what he had written to the Mahatma for his examination and signature. In the course of years, his style and very handwriting took on a character which was almost indistinguishable from that of his master. His presence was like a shadow, always accompanying Gandhi, but never intruding upon him. In the London days, in 1931, I cannot seem to remember a time when Desai was not present or within call, nor recollect a specific thing he said or did. So self-effacing he was, so quiet, so humble, so loving! When he died, it seemed for a moment as though the shadow had eaten up the sun. But in due course Desai's memory was

shining in its own right, and adding its luster to Gandhi's. Like St. John, in the Christian legend, Desai was "the well-beloved disciple."

To take Desai's place there was one as if selected by long experience and devotion—Gandhi's disciple, Pyarelal Nayyar. He had the same rare qualities which glorified Desai—an unexcelled meekness of spirit, and a veritable passion to serve the Mahatma. For five years (1943-1948), to Gandhi's great comfort and satisfaction, he stood by and now is still on duty, so to speak, in gathering material for what will undoubtedly be the definitive and authoritative biography of the Mahatma. Like Desai, he has woven himself into the texture of Gandhi's life and, through sheer self-abnegation, become as it were a golden thread in the lovely pattern.

Among all the goodly company of disciples, there is none quite so unique as Mirabehn, the English girl who years ago surrendered her family, her fortune, her country, to the blessed task of serving at Gandhi's feet. Now the head of a school, or *ashram*, which she has planted in the foothills of the Himalayas, she can look back on twenty-four years of unfailing love for Bapu, who himself adopted her as a spiritual daughter.

It was by a roundabout way that she found Gandhi. It began with a love of music which drew her to Romain Rolland through his writings on Beethoven. This drew her in turn to Gandhi, whose biography the great Frenchman had written. This book she read, and by it was profoundly moved. "From that moment," she writes, "I knew that my life was dedicated to Bapu." She felt herself suffused, as it were, by "an extraordinary sense of mellow happiness." This was accompanied by a light which, like the dawn, "glowed brighter and brighter in my heart," and at last became as "the sun of Truth pouring his rays into my soul."

The natural thing for Mira to have done was to go to Gandhi and make confession of her devotion. This she would have done had her experience been an instance of mere emotionalism of the romantic type. She would have rushed to Gandhi, if only to indulge her sentimental intoxication. But she did nothing of the sort. Not only did she not go to India to throw herself at the Mahatma's feet. She did not even write him, nor communicate with him in any way. With amazing sanity and self-control she set herself to the business of preparation, both physical and spiritual, for what she now regarded as her life task. This involved training in as apparently trivial an exercise as sitting cross-legged upon the floor, and in as definitely important a one as diet and knowledge of Hindu literature. Only when she had completed almost a year of intense concentration and hard labor, did she feel herself fit to come into Gandhi's presence and offer him the service of her hand and heart. Deeply touching is the scene of her meeting with the Mahatma, as described in her Preface to her book, *Gandhi's Letters to a Disciple.** "I could see and feel nothing but a heavenly light. . . . He lifted me up, and taking me in his arms, said, 'You shall be my daughter.' And so it has been from that day."

There can be no doubt of the nature of this episode, and all that followed after. It was a case of religious ecstasy of the highest and purest character. It was the soul obedient to God and to his servant. It is all so plain, and yet so wonderful, when the spirit takes command of a personality! Mira was changed in an instant—not by any sentiment of passion, but by a capture of her whole life by the subduing power of the divine. God spoke in the sudden disclosure of Gandhi to his disciple, and Mira had the courage and the supreme intelligence

* Published in this country by Harper & Brothers, 1950.

to answer. Her life therewith became exalted, and to the end as beautiful as a gift laid upon an altar.

The story of Mirabehn is one of the great idylls of sacred history. It brings to mind the consecrated women in the New Testament who followed Jesus in his ministry. It recalls the lovely legend of St. Francis and the Lady Clare. The marvel of this episode, as it runs through more than a score of years, is the utter fitness of Mira for the self-imposed role which she assumed in the stupendous drama of Gandhi's life. Daughter of a distinguished British admiral, in her youthful years a glamorous social figure, highly educated, tall in stature, beautiful, proud of bearing, with glowing eyes and liquid voice, Mira naturally and easily dominated every scene upon which she entered. When she came to India and vowed her service to the Mahatma, she became at once, in appearance and actuality, an Indian woman. Thus, she donned a *sari*, or robe, made of coarse cotton cloth. I think I never saw her clad in the gorgeous silken garments that adorn the higher-class women of Indian society. On her feet she wore sandals, or else went barefoot in the dust and dirt of native soil. Around her shaven head she draws the clinging folds of a hood or scarf. Her temper is even, and nobly disciplined. Her self-abnegation is absolute. She thinks of nothing but Gandhi, to care for him while he was alive, and now that he is dead, to preserve inviolate the tradition of his days. Mirabehn might have easily stirred jealousy, had she not been too humble to assert claims or force intrusions. Gandhi, who recognized early her worth, kept her close at hand, and more and more came to lean upon her, with utter dependence upon her willing spirit. I saw and talked with Mira on numerous occasions, and found her always kind, helpful, and

considerate. She was what Gandhi made her, and thus a saint in reflection of his sanctity.

III

To pass beyond the bounds of Gandhi's immediate disciples is to be carried into the great world of public affairs. Here Jawaharlal Nehru is pre-eminent as statesman, scholar, and friend of Gandhi. Only this word "friend," lovely as it is, does not even begin to convey the intimacy of the relationship between these two men. Gandhi delighted in Nehru as a father delights in an infinitely talented and devoted son, and trusted him in all his superb leadership of the Indian cause. And Nehru loved Gandhi, and for years, down to the last day of the Mahatma's life, did nothing without the counsel and advice of the older man. To see these two together was to see the human spirit in its truest and most beautiful estate, and to behold Nehru at the ceremonies following upon Gandhi's death was to behold a broken heart. Only in the untimely passing of his wife did Jawaharlal touch such deeps of sorrow as in the passing of the Mahatma.

In the beginning of his career, Nehru showed all the promise but little of the purpose of a great public leader. Born in Kashmir of one of the most distinguished of Indian families, and of a father as notable in character as in ability and influence, Jawaharlal Nehru was graced by every nobler quality of manhood. In personal appearance he had the stature and beauty of a god. His voice was sheer music, a marvelous instrument for his oratory which can be matched only by a scant few of his contemporaries. He had wealth to make him a man of leisure, and intellect highly trained as a graduate of Trinity College, Cambridge, to equip him for outstand-

ing service in the field of scholarship. "In gaining Nehru for the nationalistic cause," said a great Indian to me, "we lost what would have been one of the greatest scholars India ever produced."

I saw evidence of this in my first meeting with Nehru in New Delhi. It was at a luncheon with distinguished friends and associates. Nehru as the particular guest of honor sat in the center of the table; I sat at his left, and my son Roger at his right. Promptly, after taking our places, I addressed to him certain questions pertaining to the massacres incident to the partition of India and Pakistan, and the awful trains of refugees which were at that moment pouring from south and north into Delhi as a kind of center of rescue. But Nehru made only brief and almost heedless replies. He did not seem interested, indeed was so abstracted as not to follow at all my succession of inquiries. I watched him closely, and saw how haggard he looked. I remembered a statement of my host, who was a physician, that the Prime Minister, since the fighting began, had averaged not more than three or four hours' sleep a night. Why should this tired man be concerned with me or my interests? How could he hold his mind to that luncheon table when the lives of millions of helpless folk hung desperately on his thought and action? If ever a man, burdened with desperate responsibilities in an hour of chaos, had excuse for inattention, it was Pandit Nehru on this occasion. So I ceased my chatter, and waited.

Suddenly I heard my son's voice addressing Nehru. He explained the discussion he was having with a professor of philosophy, seated at his right, on the characteristic philosophies of America and India. The one was pragmatism and the other idealism, and there seemed

to be no reconciliation between the two. "Can you agree to that?" my son exclaimed. "Is there no middle ground here?"

Instantly Nehru seemed to come to life. He responded to my son's inquiries. Stirred by argument, his own ideas came pouring forth. For a few happy moments he was aroused. It would be easy to say that Nehru, in this passing episode, was giving way to ineffable relief at a moment's escape from his terrible anxieties and responsibilities as Prime Minister of the realm. More likely is it that a man loving and longing for intellectual discourse seized avidly this unexpected opportunity to talk philosophy. In any case, I seemed to see, as in a lightning flash, the Nehru who might have been India's great scholar and thinker, if times had been different. As it was, the living flame leaped high as it consumed fresh fuel, then flickered and went out. It was now again the politician and statesman who sat beside me, tired, worn, troubled. What a loss was here! How much of the higher life of man will survive this age of war!

At the start of his career, Jawaharlal showed slight inclination to enlist in India's dangerous struggle for independence. He knew little, and cared less, about the curious man who was leading in this struggle. His mind, in its systematic training, was more Western than it was Eastern. He was, and still remains, a socialist in his political thinking. In his philosophical and religious approach to life, he was, and is today, more of a sceptic than a believer, but a profound scholar. On his return to India from his studies in England, he must have been sorely tempted by the social life fostered and enjoyed by the select classes of the day. Then came the shock of his father's sudden acceptance of Gandhi and the National Congress. One of the most eminent and powerful

Indians of his time, Motilal Nehru surrendered everything he had—his wealth, his reputation, his time and strength, and brilliant abilities—to the cause of India's freedom. It was only natural that an adoring son should have been enormously impressed by his father's action. In due course, Jawaharlal followed in his father's footsteps, and, on his death, took his place in the ranks of the outstanding leaders of the cause. To see on Nehru's brow today the familiar Gandhi cap is to see the abiding symbol of the transformation and transfiguration of Nehru's life.

Once he had taken the formidable step of espousing revolution, Nehru gave his wholehearted devotion to the revolt against British rule. Again and again his uncompromising action led to his arrest and punishment. Not less than twelve years he spent in prison, no sooner released from one incarceration in English jails than he was preparing for another. As the struggle proceeded, Gandhi found himself drawn ever closer to this heroic young man who was so gallantly perpetuating his father's tradition. In the last exciting days before independence, Gandhi and Nehru worked unceasingly and happily together for the cause which held them fast. In many matters they did not agree. Thus, Nehru had serious question of *Satyagraha*, and never took Gandhi's extreme position in repudiation of physical force. He was not, as we would say, a nonresistant. Nehru's attitude toward industry and the machine was far removed from Gandhi's reliance upon the arts and crafts of simple village life. Nehru hated war and all the attendant practices of organized violence, but in a crisis was not unwilling to appeal to arms. But no variety or clash of opinion could separate these two great men. Their spirits if not their minds were one, and the single

end and aim of struggle against Britain held them in a common allegiance. So long as Gandhi lived, was Nehru's inward resolve with himself, he would impose no conflicting issues upon the Mahatma's attention, but follow gladly where he led. In the power and beauty of this friendship, and the effectiveness of the compact which bound the older and the younger man together, was the final secret of the triumph which they wrought.

It is amazing that, in her hour of high destiny, India should have produced these two great men, so complementary the one to the other. One is tempted to believe that posterity will link their names in the spirit of Scott's tribute to two very different men, Pitt and Fox—

> And ne'er held marble in its trust
> Of two such wondrous men the dust.

But in this case there is a third name to be added to the other two—that of Rabindranath Tagore, poet, prophet, and seer. In the early days of their patriotic association, Tagore enjoyed a fame far greater than that of Gandhi. He had become a figure of international renown through his poems, plays and addresses, which were universally recognized and accepted as an expression of Indian culture as exalted as it was accurate. But when the crisis called, Tagore laid all his treasure upon the altars of the nation's need, dramatizing his action by the public surrender of the knighthood conferred earlier upon him by the hand of England's king and India's emperor.

Never was there a man who so "looked the part" as Tagore. His white hair and flowing beard, his tall and dignified stature, his noble mien and statuesque repose, all so beautifully set off, so to speak, by his silken robes and poetic diction, were as though composed for some

dreamlike picture of an ancient bard. In all this, of course, he was the precise opposite of Gandhi, whose face and figure were so unimpressive. In this contrast in outward appearance, there was much that was the sheer reflection of inner quality. Thus, Tagore changed to beauty everything he touched, whereas Gandhi seemed to have no real sense of beauty at all, or at least no concern for its expression. The latter's *ashram*, for example, was an abiding place which emphasized convenience, utility, and sanitation. Tagore's Visva-Bharati, at Santiniketan, was an art as well as a school, with dancing, painting, and poetry conspicuous parts of the curriculum. With Tagore the practice of religion had an outward glory as well as an inward spirit. I felt this when on Christmas night, in 1947, I conducted a Christian service in the Hindu temple which Tagore had reared in his school, to be used for religious purposes by any sincere person or group who had need of a place to worship God. The temple was simple—no adornment for adornment's sake!—but strangely beautiful. Tagore loved to read here—and pray. It was distinctive of the poet's whole life—his dedication of beauty to the varied uses and needs of men. Gandhi, I felt, would not be particularly interested in this sacred and lovely place.

The same thing was true of these two remarkable men in their literary styles. Of Gandhi it may be not unfairly said that he had no style apart from a certain clarity which seldom failed to express his inmost thought. The Mahatma was one of the most voluminous writers who ever lived. When he was not talking or listening, spinning or praying, he was busy with his pen, and for a long period of years wrote an enormous number of books, articles, and letters, including his two-volume autobiography. But, with rare exceptions, these writings

were not literature. Gandhi was a great leader, but not a great author. Tagore, on the other hand, was one of the greatest poets of modern times. The *Gitanjali* is a classic in English as well as in Hindu literature. Indeed, so much was poetry the essence of Tagore's soul, as well as of his style, that his academic lectures and philosophical writings were suffused with a beauty all his own. As a Nobel Prize winner, he was immortally marked as supreme among his peers.

Such was the difference between these two great men. Yet were they one in their dedication to Mother India in her quest of liberty. This is not meant to imply that they invariably saw eye to eye on the passing issues of the day. On the contrary, they were sometimes in sharp disagreement, as on the occasion when Gandhi supported, or at least did not condemn, the burning of bales of cotton cloth as a kind of gesture of defiance of the Crown, on behalf of the emancipation of the people. Tagore disavowed this act as a form of violence and ill will, and Gandhi held to his position alone. But in all essential matters of principle as contrasted with policy, the Mahatma and the poet stood stalwartly together. More than once, in some great crisis of Gandhi's life—an imprisonment, a fast, negotiations with the Viceroy—Tagore gave Gandhi, by spoken word or participating act, his whole support. He was drawn, first, by a passionate desire to see his country free from the imperialistic exploitation which was bringing the Western world to war and ruin. But equally was he drawn by "the little brown man" who had made this cause sacred to the hearts of millions. Tagore had great pride and dignity as well as genius, and all he gave to Gandhi for India's use.

Any list of Gandhi's friends and colleagues would

be incomplete without mention of Mme. Sarojini Naidu, greatest of Indian women. In her I find a perfect illustration of Gandhi's power to capture the souls of men, and bind them to him with bonds not of steel but of the spirit. For Mme. Naidu, dowered with majestic and potent personality, was in her youthful years a leader of the great cause of the uplift and emancipation of women, and in her own right a poet of rare qualities of thought and beauty. As in the case of Tagore, her writings were read and admired in the West and in the East. But in her literary as in her political work at this time, there was little of the rebel. Her activities fitted all too well into the framework of British rule. It was only when she heard the call of Gandhi that her life broke into flame. Forgotten were her poems, neglected her conventional if idealistic service of the public weal. Gandhi was now her master, and she the faithful follower. Her power of agitation was enormous, her courage limitless. With the Mahatma, she practiced nonviolent resistance to the British crown. She led the people on the public streets in great masses of revolt. She spoke to multitudes with a passion of eloquence matched only by the utterance of Nehru. She went to prison, proud and happy to follow in the path of Gandhi. She possessed a sense of humor which eased many a crisis of rebellion. Thus, on a certain day, she was leading a vast crowd of Indians who were demonstrating in the public streets. In nonviolent opposition to the police, this swirling mass of men and women staged a sit-down strike, and brought the traffic of the city to a standstill. Mme. Naidu, in the forefront of the crowd, sat quietly on the pavement, inviting and thus awaiting arrest. But as time went on, hour after hour, this heroic woman found her seat becoming more and more uncomfortable. How long must

she wait for the action of the police? At last she rose, bade a servant to find a rocking chair, placed this piece of furniture in the middle of the street, and sat down, rocking back and forth in perfect comfort.

Mme. Naidu was a woman of glorious presence, magnetic, commanding, serene. She was short rather than tall, and in figure dumpy, rather like Queen Victoria. When asked by a visitor what free India was going to do with all the statues of Victoria scattered through the land, she answered with utter imperturbability, "cut off their heads and put mine in their place." To a group of newspaper photographers, trying to get the distinguished lady in an unusual pose, she cried, "Come, boys, hurry up. I am the same on all sides, fat and round." In her actual physique, therefore, there was little that was remarkable. But in action she was superb. An inner spirit seemed to rise within her, and transfigure her appearance. She became suddenly regal in bearing. As by some unique power, she became the central figure of any situation in which she found herself. Without any effort on her part, she attracted and held attention. Even Gandhi had to share with her any company in which they appeared together.

But it was as an orator that she was supreme. I heard her last at the annual Convocation of the Benares Hindu University, on December 14, 1947, when we received together honorary degrees. A vast audience of some fifteen thousand students, graduates, faculty, and the general public, were present. I shall not soon forget the ease with which Mme. Naidu caught up that gathering and swept it with the surging emotion of her speech. In dress and bearing like a queen, she seemed to rise in stature as her words flowed on, and become the dominating figure in that great assembly. Her message was of

joy in the new free India, and of challenge to these students to be worthy of their country which they were born to serve. Governor-General of the United Provinces, she had on this occasion a political significance and authority. But it was the woman who stood forth to command the scene by virtue of intelligence and personality. I saw and talked with her on private occasions—meetings of domestic and academic groups where there was earnest discussion of India and her destiny. Here we discovered in Mme. Naidu vast stores of information, her stern and unshakable convictions, and her power of personal expression.

Mme. Naidu's devotion to Gandhi was the central passion of her closing years. She called him proudly "her little son." Obliged to respond to his slightest call, she made it her special duty to rally the women of India to the nationalist movement. Under her leadership, by force of her example, there came a participation of women in the national cause which was one of the tremendous achievements of the hour. What wonder that all of India mourned when this greatest of Indian women died!

IV

But it was not in India only that Gandhi found his friends and followers. It is remarkable that in England there were those who came to help him, as witness the beautiful example of Mirabehn. Conspicuous among them was his "crony," if I may call him such, the English missionary, "Charlie" Andrews. There was a friendship between these two men like that of David and Jonathan "which [passed] the love of women." Andrews met Gandhi early in his career, and seemed instantly to discover in him the Christ spirit which was the substance

of his Christian faith. Gandhi, on his side, found in Andrews all those qualities which comprise the ideals of his Hindu faith. The two men instinctively met on the common ground of the spirit, and there they clasped hands in a pact of loyalty which lasted till Andrews's death. Often, through long periods of time, Andrews was far away in some distant part of the world, in pursuit of the Christian mission which remained his life-work to the end. But always was he "on call." Gandhi had but to lift a cry for help, and Andrews would straightway turn about in answer. And trains and steamships were not fast enough to bring him to Gandhi's side. His presence at the Great Fast of the Mahatma is symptomatic of his life.

Memorable was the day I first saw him here in New York. We had arranged to lunch together, and he met me in my office. He was a queer figure. Perched precariously on the top of his head was a round, badly battered felt hat. His clothes looked worn and rumpled, quite innocent of the care of any tailor. He carried some books under his arm, and I seem to recall an old umbrella. His scraggly beard half hid a face which was beaming with kindliness. We walked to the hotel, a few blocks away, and attracted some attention. It was not every day that the gaudy dining room received such a guest. But "Charlie" was quite oblivious of his surroundings. Wholly absorbed in our talk about Gandhi, and the situation in India, we were as if alone together. Even the food did not intrude, though "Charlie" had a hard time making his selection from the enormous menu. Except only in Gandhi himself, I have never seen such genuine sanctity of character as I beheld in Andrews on this slight occasion. It shone in his eyes, his smile, his words. His whole figure, so careless without, was illumined as

by an inner radiance. I thought at once, and to the end, of the good St. Francis who must have appeared to his companions much as Andrews appeared that day to me. The light within cannot be hid, and it is the loveliest thing in all the world.

If any man of the saintly type can have a successor, "Charlie" Andrews found his in Horace Alexander, the English Quaker. Reginald Reynolds, in his recent book, *A Quest for Gandhi*, speaks of Alexander as "a man almost as well known in India today as Charles Andrews was in my boyhood. . . . Among the many Europeans who have been associated with Gandhi and the cause of Indian freedom, the name of Horace Alexander cannot be ignored either by future Indian historians or by biographers of the Mahatma."

Alexander is a kind of combination of missionary, teacher, preacher, nature lover, and world-wide friend of man. His home is in England, but, as in the case of Andrews, it is more accurately described as being wherever at any moment Horace Alexander may chance to be. Like Andrews, he heeds the call of service, and thus goes speeding off to any part of the universe, remote or near at hand, where he may be useful. He went to India, in the days of struggle for independence, as naturally and indeed inevitably as an iron filing to a magnet. Of course, he sought out Gandhi, and the two men fell in love with each other and became inseparable companions of the spirit. Neither Andrews nor Alexander sacrificed his personal integrity in his relations with the Mahatma. If they disagreed with Gandhi, they said so, and declined to go along. But differences of opinion, usually on matters pertaining to the problem of applying ideals to practical policies, affected not in the slightest their mutual trust. Indeed, it was this per-

fect honesty which drew these men together, and made them Gandhi's closest counselors.

I first met Alexander at Santiniketan, the great international school and art center, founded and through many years directed by Rabindranath Tagore. We had come in answer to an invitation from Tagore's son, now head of the school, to spend Christmas with his family. I saw and talked with Horace through the four or five days of our stay in Santiniketan. This was not easy, as he seemed content to linger on the outskirts of the groups, large or small, which assembled from time to time, and to listen rather than to talk. I think of him as a quiet and humble presence which lifted us all through silent influence to higher levels of the spirit. But he had his chance when, in the interval between luncheon and train time, he addressed the company before his quick departure. I remember dimly the substance of his talk, but shall not soon forget its form and manner. It was the pure spirit pouring itself forth on the "concerns" which trouble our hearts in these tremendously troubled days. Another speaker, of different mood and temperament, might have excited and perhaps terrified us in a tirade of eloquence and passion. But Alexander was quietly serene, while avoiding none of the pressing problems of the hour. I remember, with an envy which has lasted through these years, the utter calm with which he brought his discourse to a close, and departed, unhurried, to catch his train. It may be that the unfailing lateness of Indian trains had something to do with his conduct, but I prefer to think that it was his inner spirit which made him master of the situation.

Future historians of India will find large space in their chronicles for Horace Alexander. Their narrative will center, I believe, more about his courage than about

any other of his saintly qualities. And of the numerous instances of this courage, none will surpass his presence with Gandhi in the terrific days in Calcutta when the city and the surrounding countryside burst into the consuming flame of hate and massacre kindled by the partition of Pakistan. For days the horror of violence and bloodshed swept the streets. Thousands of contending Hindus and Moslems lay dead or wounded in the gutters. To Gandhi the situation called for instant action. He must search out the center of the fighting and give himself, even unto death, to stilling the storm which resumed itself with each new day. With utter courage the Mahatma made his way into Calcutta, unarmed save by the power of his presence, and, himself a Hindu, sought conference with the Moslem leaders. This was one of the supreme moments of Gandhi's life, and one of his most triumphant achievements. His life in peril from the raging mob, he brought peace to a place where it was thought that peace would never come again. This done, the Mahatma went on to New Delhi where the same storm was threatening the proud capital with ruin.

Horace Alexander was engaged on some mission of his own, probably the work of the Friends Service Committee, when the news of the Calcutta riots reached his ears. He knew, without waiting for detailed reports, that Gandhi would be where the fighting was most furious and the task of peace most difficult and dangerous. He might not need help, for the Mahatma's work in an extremity of this kind must be singlehanded. But he, like any other man near to violence and death, needed sympathy, companionship, reassurance, and these Alexander could give more effectively than any other man alive. So he went to Calcutta, faced instant peril unafraid, and departed only when peace had been restored.

Horace Alexander represents the finest quality of manhood, is the perfect specimen of spiritual Christianity, and the model Quaker. I had known of him for years, but had never seen him. When the happy occasion of our meeting came at Santiniketan, he looked just as I had imagined he would. In appearance, manner, speech, he was exactly what I had expected. So do disciples of the Spirit fulfill themselves.

To Andrews and to Alexander must be added, as a friend of Gandhi, an English woman, Muriel Lester, founder and director of Kingsley Hall. Miss Lester is a devout Christian. All that she does, so conscientiously and inconspicuously, is in the spirit of Christ. Prayer and discipline compose the pattern of her life, which is all the while interwoven with ceaseless service of mankind. Well-born, ably educated, and with ample fortune, she eagerly surrendered her life to the poor of London's slums. In the first years of her vigorous and charming womanhood, she devoted her energies almost exclusively to Kingsley Hall, which was her own creation. In later years she became a kind of wandering missionary, in succor of those anywhere who were suffering from injustice and oppression. Wherever she went she preached Christ and the Mahatma, who more and more tended to become one in her apprehension of divinity. Gandhi meant to her the triumph of the spirit over the flesh. He meant peace, brotherhood, and love in the nonviolent sense. Everywhere there was need of this gospel, and where need seemed greatest, there Miss Lester went, to bear witness to the truth. When she was in India, she stopped with Gandhi at his *ashram,* or followed him as he traveled from place to place. When Gandhi came to England in 1931, he must of course stay at the settlement in the slums. Muriel Lester is a sweet and gracious

person, resolute also in the sweeping conviction of her faith that Gandhi in his thought and life is right to a degree not reached by other men. Her clear blue eyes are bright with surety. Her smile anticipates the coming of the glad new day. She believes in men and God, and fears not, therefore, what may be coming. "If God is for us, who can be against us."

If I went on, I would mention Lord Mountbatten, the last of the viceroys, who became, with his lady, one of Gandhi's trusted friends. Of course, he could not be described as an intimate, for Lord Mountbatten was rigorously faithful to the exactions of his office. He was courageous and loyal, and never forgot his King. But he was also, as I met and talked with him, the *parfait gentilhomme,* and to such a person Gandhi's appeal was irresistible. Constantly this royal Britisher sat at the Mahatma's feet, to drink refreshment from his spirit, and also to consult with him about difficult problems in public affairs. Mountbatten was charged with the tremendous responsibility of removing Britain from India with full dignity and honor. Here Gandhi's help was indispensable, and the two men became as one in their service of a common cause. When the anarchy which accompanied partition swept Pakistan and adjacent territories of India with fire and sword, Lord Mountbatten plunged into the maelstrom of disorder, to restore peace and safety to the stricken population. It was on this occasion that he paid the Mahatma the perfect tribute. "In these times," he is reported to have said, "Gandhi has done by his mere presence what I was unable to do with fifty thousand men."

V

These are a few from out the vast multitude of men and women who found Gandhi, in the Carlylean phrase,

to be "profitable company." To the visitor in India, it seems as though everybody of any consequence in that country had, at one time or another, met Gandhi, talked with Gandhi, conferred with Gandhi, and thereby had their lives guided and enriched. Beyond these happy ones were the millions who had, in one way or another, touched the hem of his garment. And beyond these, across continents and seas, were the multitudes who had heard Gandhi's name, and knew something of his word and work, and were drawn to him to a degree not recognized until they were suddenly stricken with grief and horror by Gandhi's death. The influence of the Mahatma was immeasurable. It was, again in Carlylean phrase, a "light" which illumined "the darkness of the world." Nay, more, it was "a flowing light-fountain . . . in whose radiance all souls feel that it [was] well with them." If we knew Gandhi, or had merely heard of him, then we were confident again. Seeing him, or feeling his influence, we took heart, and refused to despair of a world which seemed utterly lost in violence and hate. Alone, against the whole body of humankind, Gandhi dared to live in the spirit, and to build his statesmanship, as well as his private concerns, on the foundation of the moral law. Soul force was his only weapon, and with it he won the victory against a world in arms. What wonder that men reached to him as to a sustaining power, and in his closing years constituted a following larger and more dependent than any hitherto known in history.

But where did Gandhi himself gain the power which he shared to abundantly with other men? In the exploratory answer prompted by this question is revealed the secret of the Mahatma's being.

Gandhi, in the last analysis, was a mystic. Like all mystics who possess a power beyond themselves, he drew his life from God. But his communion with the divine

was so simple, so easy, that it was hardly recognized as such, especially when it was accompanied by none of the raptures and ecstasies that are associated with direct experience with God. Gandhi's experience was as intimate as it was natural, and was sought at regular intervals, when his soul needed replenishment after his lavish impartation of the spirit to other men. Thus, he turned to God in prayer both morning and evening, and constantly, as in the case of his silent Mondays, made opportunity for contact with that original source of Truth which was to him the real presence of the divine. Anyone who has had the privilege of sharing these approaches of Gandhi to God needs no argument as to their reality and beauty. Everyone who would understand and interpret Gandhi to mankind must make these prayers the central theme of his discourse. The Mahatma was always modest and humble. He boasted of nothing that was above or beyond the reach of other men. But he had also an assurance and authority, which sprang from that living consciousness of God which was his own. If Gandhi was "a shining luminary," to quote Carlyle again, it was because he kindled his torch at the central fires of eternal being.

It is not often in human history that men join at once the inner and the outer life, and thus make saint and statesman one. But when they do, they shake the world, and turn the tides of destiny.

CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY

IT WAS SAID of the Queen of Sheba that when she visited Solomon in Jerusalem, she remarked to the great King, "It was a true report that I heard in my land of thy acts and of thy wisdom. Howbeit . . . the half was not told me."

I

If this were true of Gandhi as it was of King Solomon, it was not his fault. For Gandhi placed no bound or ban upon his life. He hid nothing from the world. For one thing, Gandhi lived in an age of publicity, when nothing is hid from the pencil of the reporter any more than from the eye of God. Then there are Gandhi's own writings—his public addresses, his personal interviews, his letters and prayers—in which he makes plain, to all who may be interested, his ideas and ideals, his plans and policies, his reasons *in extenso* for what he did or did not do. His autobiography, *The Story of My Experiments with Truth,* is a confessional document of unique appeal. In *Gandhi's Letters to a Disciple,* the Mahatma discusses questions of food and diet, illness, cure, little incidents and accidents of daily life, with a fullness and intimacy of detail which are almost embarrassing. Then there are the testimonies and tributes, the reports and records and reminiscences, of Gandhi's

followers and friends who wrote before his death, which itself released a flood of first-hand biographical data. Only in the South African period, when the world destiny of Gandhi was not even guessed, is there any lack of this abundant literary material. The longer Gandhi lived and the higher he climbed in his leadership of the Indian people, the clearer became the content of his career.

There were deeps in Gandhi, to be sure, which are difficult to fathom. He himself did not know, at least in the beginning, the mysteries of his being, or the focus of his fate. How otherwise explain certain aspects of his career and conduct in South Africa which stand so utterly contrary to the fixed pattern of his later days? Only slowly did it become apparent that the Mahatma's distinctive qualities were spiritual rather than physical or intellectual, and that the latter took on importance only to the extent that they could be useful to the former. Thus, all his life, as we have seen, Gandhi was interested in problems of physical health, which seemed to exercise a kind of fascination over his mind. But beyond a few extreme ideas and practices, he contributed little to their solution. The vast spate of his writings through many years represents a sustained intellectual activity, but contain few if any passages of marked literary distinction. His thought worked itself out into no systematic philosophy or ordered arrangement of ideas. He cherished a devout religious faith, which he was never tempted to set up as the organizational center of a cult or sect. It was in the pure realm of the spirit that he excelled, especially as he applied his principles to economic, political, and social problems with a courage and insight which marked him as the supreme personality of his age. It was here, at this point of contact, that he

met with God, communed with him in secret, and, under his divine guidance, reached his bold decisions. This was a disciplined process of putting his soul to work, with results that were patent to all, but none the less hard to understand.

Yet in Gandhi was a great simplicity! This simplicity was the product of a basic integrity, which concealed nothing, played no devious tricks, practiced no deceptions. In his life was no confusion of motive, no hesitancy, no self-distrust, no doubt. For whatever he said and did was only what he deemed to be right in the all-seeing sight of God. Gandhi was accused often enough of being a politician cleverer than the rest because more unscrupulous and hypocritical in making God his partner. It seemed incredible that any leader of men, in such a crisis as impended upon him, could be so naïve! But in due course it was seen that Gandhi was sound in his convictions and utterly sincere. To him God was not a dogma but a real presence—God was Truth, as Truth in turn was God. This meant that the Mahatma had no personal ends to serve, except as he would to his own self be true. His whole life was an obedience to God. It was as simple, and as wonderful, as that!

II

It must be obvious by now that Gandhi was primarily a saint. From the lofty standpoint of this characterization, we can best comprehend his word and work. The Hindus knew this well when, long years ago, they sanctified him by the title, recognized and fondly used by millions, of "Mahatma." It was a part of his saint-hood to object to this title. He himself never used it, and it had no place in the circle of his disciples. Here Gand-

hiji and Bapu were the beloved names. But the tides of popular acclaim and reverence swept all opposition away, and to the multitudes he remained Mahatma to the end.

Of the various attributes of sanctity, Gandhi's inextinguishable gaiety comes first. There were times, of course, too serious and indeed too terrible for laughter. Such a time was the one when I saw him last. Rapine and ruin, disaster and death, were sweeping the countryside in the struggle between Hindus and Moslems which followed upon partition. Gandhi was overwhelmed by sorrow and shame, and it was hard for him to smile. In happier and nobler times, in moments when he was making some supreme sacrifice for the freedom of his people—imprisonment, fasting, or what not—his sense of humor was irresistible. We have already seen Gandhi's amusing way of accepting imprisonment as a welcome opportunity for spinning, reading, writing, or meditation with God. This was the sunny side of his unconquerable equanimity, coupled with the embarrassment of his utterly bewildered jailers. But it was in his contacts with his friends and visitors that his gaiety was most easily aroused. Peals of laughter were the music that made beautiful his *ashram.* The saints, for some mysterious reason, are almost invariably happy people. St. Francis of Assisi could be stern, unbending, but was far more often joyous. In this they differ from the theologians, who are so deadly serious, and from the ecclesiastics, frequently so cruel. So it was with Gandhi, who never allowed pain, or disappointment, or frustration to get the better of him. With God on the scene there was no need to worry, or be sad. Only to be glad!

A second attribute of sanctity is disinterestedness—that selfless love which asks nothing for oneself and

everything for others. Gandhi had not always possessed this saintly quality. On the contrary, he started out with much the same elements of character as may be found in ordinary men. Thus, he was ambitious of advancement in his chosen profession. He opened a law office in Bombay, partly at least to earn and accumulate money. He accepted a brief in South Africa, and charged a large fee for his services. In his family, in these days of his early manhood, he was a martinet in discipline. He must dictate and rule, and wife, children, even friends must heed his mandate. Then, little by little, and none the less surely, he purged himself of his vanities. For the sake of his people, in India and South Africa alike, he put aside all worldly interests and pursuits. Sacrifice now became the central impulse of his inner spirit. Ambition melted away. Private enterprise yielded to public service. Property became of no concern. His family was seen only as a part of the great body of mankind. At last the Mahatma became the living symbol of India's need. No home but a mud hut in the *ashram,* no food but a handful of nuts and rice in his beggar's bowl, no clothing but his loin cloth and shawl, no money, no possessions, no official power, he found himself for the first time free to serve India without worry or concern. Through sheer self-abnegation, he became one with its poverty-stricken millions, and a saint in their adoration and devotion. Never in all history was a sanctified leader so effective in his work for humankind, and in his asceticism so glorious an example of virtue.

What Gandhi denied himself he sought wholeheartedly for others. This is the real explanation of his heroic and ceaseless labor for the deliverance of India from the rule of the British crown. Political independence was

more or less of an abstraction—a slogan to stir the minds of millions. Gandhi came to the idea slowly, even reluctantly. Indeed, it may be said that he was at last driven to the far extreme of policy by the crass stupidity of British officials who consistently outraged the people and their leaders. But always, even in the days of fiercest contention, Gandhi regarded independence as a means to the great end of delivering the far-flung population of the land from poverty, disease, and other miseries which degraded Indians to a level of subsistence which no human beings should be expected to endure. The whole passion of Gandhi's soul was dedicated to the uplift and security of the common people. As long as they were all but naked in their need, so he would be all but naked for their sake. But always he looked beyond, to the hour of emancipation, when the fruits of their labor would be their own, and not the booty of the exploiters, native and foreign, who fed fat upon them. Not a man in all India but held the Mahatma's devotion—not a family that was not akin to his own. Gandhi's heart was big enough to contain all these multitudes, and each individual among them all had Gandhi's pity, and felt himself, to an intensive degree, to be his brother.

Of Gandhi's compassion for mankind—the poor, the outcast, the forlorn—there can be no more effective an example than his attitude toward the untouchables, whose emancipation he sought for years with steadfast purpose. For this no date can be assigned, as the work was in character a kind of agitation in which the Mahatma was engaged through a period of years. While supporting the caste system as giving what seemed to him to be a stabilization of society not otherwise possible, Gandhi was horrified to behold a group of some sixty

million men and women in India altogether outside the array of castes, who were existing thus on the lowest level of insult and indignity. There is no precise moment when the Mahatma cursed the whole idea of untouchability, and sought its abolition. Gandhi simply went ahead ignoring this wretched outlawry of a whole people, and seeking, or himself creating, ways of ending it. He knew that his personal practice would slowly but surely have an influence which would be potent. So he opened his *ashram* to the untouchables, and usually had several of them in residence. He laid down the policy of recognizing untouchables as welcome members in the national movement for independence. He insisted upon his own personal contact with them. As St. Francis nursed the lepers and kissed their sores, so Gandhi ministered to the untouchables as occasion offered. The climax of his devotion came when he adopted an orphan girl born of untouchable parents, and with her brought the outcasts straight into his home and heart. It was in this fashion that the mere existence of the untouchables became an issue of large public moment, especially to those who, like the Mahatma, would have India worthy of the freedom she herself was seeking. It was inevitable but none the less notable that the new constitution of India should provide for the complete emancipation of the untouchables, and thus merge them forever in the great body of Indian life. Gandhi and his followers delivered these sixty millions of pariahs from centuries of the most degrading bondage, and therewith achieved a deed which lifts the Mahatma to an enduring place among the liberators of mankind.

As we survey these exalted attributes of being, it becomes more and more manifest, as I have said,* that

* See above, p. 159.

Gandhi was a mystic of the noblest type. Such a person seems dowered with faculties which make possible a realization of God not as a remote article of faith or a logical conclusion of speculative argument, but as a direct and immediate experience. These mystics know God as others of us know sun and rain, and they commune with him and consult with him, and heed his mandates. Their whole inner life is a radiation of the divine. Into it they tend to withdraw apart from the encompassing and distracting world, and seek therein the companionship of God. In which pursuit their lives become a pattern of God's will and a design of his holy purpose! Professor Alfred North Whitehead has defined religion as "what the individual does with his own solitariness." This is the mystical aspect of religion—the solitariness of the soul. Only the true mystic finds that he is not solitary at all, but strangely and wonderfully at home with God and his eternal presence.

It would seem as though Gandhi, of all men, were much too beset by constant duties and distractions to enjoy the fruits of the mystical life. Was he not too hopelessly entangled in human affairs to win freedom for contemplation and spiritual exercise? Facts as diverse as a mother's concern for her child which she laid at the Mahatma's feet for healing, or a priest beseeching counsel for the welfare of his village, or some drama of statesmanship which must shake the British Empire and the encompassing world—these and a myriad other appeals pressed upon him day and night, and exacted attention which he did not refuse. It was always possible, of course, for him to follow the example of the multitudinous holy men who flourished in his country. The cave men who hid themselves away in grottoes or other rocky retreats, and once a year revealed themselves

to their disciples; the priests who occupied the temple precincts and offered at intervals their formal prayers; the servants of God, in the Jain and other sects, who wandered the countryside in a purity of being which they would fain convey to other men! But these ways of life were not for Gandhi. He must be in the world while not of it—thus keep constant contact with the people while seeking still the "solitariness" of God. How he worked out this dilemma is one of the most fascinating examples of his method.

Laying down the principle that he must always be accessible to those who sought him, whether it be the peasant woman in sore distress, or the Congress member to talk politics, or the passing visitor from abroad, or the latest commission of inquiry from London, Gandhi organized his life with the meticulousness of a great executive. His door was open—no man must be allowed to knock in vain. But Gandhi had early learned the arts of relaxation and withdrawal. Thus, he kept rigorously to a time schedule, and thereby saved himself the gnawing worry of delay. He set aside one day each week for silence, and on this day, while seeking no arbitrary seclusion, and even communicating through the device of written notes, he would not talk or attend conferences. Then there were his periods of prayer—in the early morning and evening—in which he turned to God for the refreshment of his spirit. Lastly, and most important, was his deliberate communion with God when, in some dilemma of policy exacting momentous decisions, he sought, and in the end received, the divine command. Here his mystical powers received their supreme expression. Gandhi sought the Truth, and the Truth was God; and in the counsel of the divine mind, asked and never refused, he found his way as the troubled and yet serene

leader of his people. Gandhi the mystic was never uncertain or misled after his retreats with God. On the contrary, he had found the way, and dared to walk therein.

III

Such were the outward and visible signs of the Mahatma's inward and spiritual grace. All these combined, in his case, into an acceptance and use, as a fundamental principle of life, of what Christians inadequately describe as "nonresistance," and Gandhi himself as "soul force." In the battle against evil, said Gandhi, it was natural and easy to resort to physical force as the chosen weapon against the enemy. "Take up arms against a sea of troubles, and by opposing end them"! But arms, and all varieties of physical force, are self-destructive—he that takes the sword shall perish by the sword. Furthermore, the use of violence is immoral, in that it profanes the sanctity of the human spirit, and outrages the innate dignity of man. As a means to an end, however good, it is a bad means, and thus corrupts and in the end destroys the good which is its aim. It is the spirit which alone is pure, and thus potent for all good. To live in the spirit is to love mankind, enemies as well as friends, and therewith to create an atmosphere in which good can alone survive. "Love never fails," for its power is one with the very order of the stars.

This, of course, is nothing new. "Nonresistance," or "nonviolence," is at least as ancient as Lao-tse and Buddha, and as modern as Garrison and Tolstoi. Gandhi himself testifies that he learned this truth quite as much from the New Testament as from his own beloved *Bhagavad-Gita*. But what Gandhi did with it is the important thing. For he made of it a new gospel, wrought

out and applied on so stupendous a scale as to shock and amaze the world.

Hitherto, the "nonresistant" idea, as I have pointed out, was limited in practice to individuals, or to small and more or less private groups of individuals. Its justification was found in the experience of such single persons as St. Francis and Tolstoi, and of such tiny minorities, set against the whole society of their time and place, as the early Christians in imperial Rome and the later Friends, or Quakers, in seventeenth-century England. It was this rarely applied principle of "nonviolence" which Gandhi rescued, so to speak, from its confinement in the single heart, and established and organized on a scale unheard or even dreamed of before. What had formerly been the ideal and heroic practice of a few hundred, or at the most a few thousand people, the Mahatma now took into the outer world of furious contention and combat, and made it the rule of life for millions. Especially did he take the rule of violence, which was deemed the only way of meeting and overcoming an enemy, and substitute therefor the rule of the spirit, in love and forgiveness, and apply it with triumphant success to a vast population struggling in India for freedom and the right. Gandhi left nothing to chance. His presentation, on the field of action, of "nonviolence" as a sole principle of action was an unparalleled achievement of spiritual genius. With the bare hands and disciplined emotions of tens of millions of men and women, his fellow countrymen, he confronted and confounded the greatest of the world empires, armed with the latest weapons of destruction. This opened up a new era of human history. It was no longer now the power of the sword which won victories, but the power of the spirit. This latter weapon, just because it was spiritual,

was irresistible. It needed training, discipline, sacrifice, to be effective at the hands of unarmed men. But military force requires the same systematic exercise—the soldiery must be an army and not a mob. Why not lift this whole undertaking to the higher levels of human endeavor? Since Gandhi's breath-taking adventure, violence of any kind is become, through Gandhi's example, an anachronism and horror. Now has come the time, foreseen by Jesus, and achieved by Gandhi, when "the meek . . . shall inherit the earth."

Thus did Gandhi the saint become Gandhi the statesman, the two made one in word and deed. In making "nonviolence" a truth not merely of individual conviction, but of nationwide social action, he became suddenly the political as well as spiritual leader of mankind. Under his exalted and potent influence his people secured their liberty unstained by human blood, and commended to the world a new and kindly, and none the less effective method of overcoming, without violence, all exploitation and tyranny, and bringing in the enduring reign of peace. I turn the pages of history, and search in vain for any parallel to this achievement—saint and statesman made one in the common service of mankind.

What has happened in this transcendent episode is a new and final challenge of Caesar. The world has fought its way through the long succession of the centuries, and by violence seen one civilization after another smitten to ruin. Now comes a supreme crisis in the crash of a civilization which may well involve the extinction of mankind. If there were no way out, it would be a tragedy and not a crime which we are facing. But Gandhi has shown us the better way, wide open to our feet. In it we must follow if we would live.

IV

Thus have I known and loved one of the great men of all time. As he has grown upon my heart since the first discovery of his work, so is he destined to grow upon the world-wide consciousness of men. With the supreme figures of history, he walks in sacred company. The prophet and minister of the spirit!

In the course of the Mahatma's long life, he expressed the truth he sought in diverse ways. I particularly like some instructions which he gave his followers as a kind of "order of the day" in an hour of grim crisis in October, 1928:

> If you are arrested, go to prison quietly.
> If assaulted, bear it cheerfully.
> If shot, die peacefully.

It is because the Mahatma lived as well as taught such truth, that he will live forever.

CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSION

I

WHAT MAKES the periodic appearance of men like Gandhi possible, if not inevitable? Is it a casual accident, or an eternal law? Humanity, beset by encompassing ills, waits with amazing patience, confident that sooner or later her redeemer will come. But the centuries pass in terrifying succession, and nothing happens. Patience itself seems to die, and becomes as it were engraved upon "a monument, smiling at grief." Then suddenly, without warning, the great man appears—a saint, a seer, a prophet, a Buddha, a Mahatma! The multitudes of the suffering and oppressed people of the earth recognize their savior, and flock to follow him. There is a stirring in men's hearts. A revolution is under way. Then the so-called authorities take action on behalf of law and order. Government, equipped with prisons, police, the military, and the final horror of stakes and crosses, is on the scene. And the movement which promised so much is suddenly at an end. With new patience humanity sinks back into its haunts of misery, and waits again for deliverance.

It would seem as though there were something at work here which surpasses the temporal and transient elements of earth. These great men, as judged by every mundane standard, fail in their high purpose for mankind, but with an exaltation of spirit and a distinction

of sacrifice which lift them immeasurably above their fellows, and give them assurance, in God's grace, of final victory. This is the reason why, after the historic drama is done, men insist that they have seen the presence of the divine in the human. Thus, Jesus, before his heroic death, was hailed as the Messiah, that superhuman member of the House of David who was to descend out of heaven to restore Israel to its lost throne of power. After Jesus's death, the Messiahship seemed inadequate to contain all the wonder of his life, and as Christianity unfolded out of Judaism, the Messiah became transfigured into the Christ, and Jesus exalted as the Son of God, and at last as the second Person of the Trinity. The same was true of Gautama who became the Buddha. In the beginning, he was a king's son, an heir of royalty, ennobled by his surrender of earthly splendor on behalf of suffering and sorrowing mankind. With his death, he became as God, and has since been worshiped as the deity itself, seeking to impress upon each separate soul the secret of the divine. And now, in our time, as though a part of the very pattern of man's days, both here and in the beyond, there appears the beautiful and strange personality of Gandhi. Already, even in the period of his lifetime, Gandhi became the Mahatma, the holy one, and in shrine and temple was lifted up and worshiped. Now, after his death and majestic burial, as we have seen, the process of apotheosis is under way, and Gandhi, translated into the Mahatma, thus made a sacred part of the Hindu faith. In the case of Gandhi, the man becomes a god, and his example a religion.

This is what we call deification, which is none other than the attempt to explain logically the historic phenomenon of these men who seem to be so much more

and better than other men. How widespread and insistent, as well as imaginative, this process may be is shown by the reference of a contemporary historian of the Papacy to what he describes as "the methodical deification of the popes that is in process." The doorway to this latest hypothesis of religious faith was opened wide by the enactment in 1870 of Pope Pius IX's dogma of papal infallibility. A better illustration is that of beatification in the Roman Church. Into the details of this mystery I need not go in this place, except to point out that its essence is the recognition of the divine spirit come alive in human beings. Men, women, and even little children are found to be so holy in their words and deeds, and so potent in this manifestation of holiness, as to defy explanation in human terms. Thus saints perform miracles, heal diseases, see visions, reveal qualities of virtue which seem to lift them to higher levels than those commonly known of on this earth. This is what is meant by sanctity—the passing of the human into the divine, and therewith making manifest the presence of the Most High.

II

One striking fact, not to be ignored, is the uniformity of the phenomenon in question. The great men—the prophets, Messiahs, and Mahatmas—have appeared in different ages and at far-flung places. Yet they are much the same. Which would seem to argue personal contact, or communication—the building up of a conscious tradition, to be preserved and passed on from generation to generation. But this is simply not so. True, the two great Chinese sages, Confucius and Lao-tse, met at one notable conference, but only to misunderstand one another beyond all explanation. There is a persisting speculation

that some at least of the last years in Jesus's life, the span from twelve to thirty, were spent in India, but there is not a scrap of real evidence to prove it. There is a similar surmise that Plato may have traveled in the Far East and matched his classic wisdom with that of the ancient holy men, but there is nothing to substantiate this idea but the attested fact that Plato, like the historian Herodotus before him, was a famous traveler. Buddha wandered far and among many peoples, and undoubtedly encountered not a few of his distinguished contemporaries. Gandhi knew London, South Africa, and his own native land, and read some Western literature to which he remained indebted to the last day of his career. But on the whole it may be said that these ethical and spiritual leaders were isolated men, and apart from their own disciples and followers were lonely figures. What they did was under the spontaneous impulse of their own inner life. What they taught, and glorified by their example, was drawn from the inexhaustible resources of their own personal natures. Their testimony was, and still remains, original, creative, and unique. Yet there is a uniformity in what they said and did which is remarkable. In all things fundamental, they were the same. Only in the trivia of thought do they differ. These inspired men kindled their torches at a central fire. They joined their voices in a single chorus. They sought and saw the Truth, and straightway imparted it to other men.

III

As an explanation of the power at work in the lives of the great and good, the concept of deification has been persuasive. It may be argued that this concept has been more than persuasive—it has rather been convincing, for it has dominated the theology of Christendom for cen-

turies. It seems extravagant and therefore questionable when applied to the Popes of Rome, especially when used to vindicate such a dubious idea as that of papal infallibility. Here it passes from the realm of theology to that of mythology. But the idea takes on reality in the case of such an exalted being as Jesus. In this relation the doctrine of deification has in it a certain poetry as well as philosophy. Nor is it unnatural for the picturesque aspects of the belief in God as definitely at work within the selected souls of men to pass over into history and become a part of the factual experience of mankind.

Without going into the finer ramifications of this conception, it may be said that the process of deification is twofold in character. On the one hand, God is thought of as a spirit inspiring men, as he inspired Isaiah in the temple, to the fulfillment of his high purpose. He does this by making his presence known in a blaze of light, a spoken word, or a passing dream. A divine visitation becomes in some form a vision which points the way and reveals the goal. God appears from without, whence he returns when his message is heard, or his mission done. The deity, in other words, remains apart from men, yet is ever ready to appear again, to counsel and command the servants of his will.

A second conception of deification is that which centers about the idea of incarnation. God takes upon himself the likeness of the flesh, and becomes, for such time as may be necessary for the achievement of his design, a human being. This conception first appears, in crude and vulgar fashion, in certain of the tales of the classic mythology of Greece and Rome. Jupiter, or Apollo, or some one of the lesser deities, takes on human form, that he may accomplish the more readily some purpose of his for the use, or abuse, or exaltation of humankind.

It is this same idea which appears, in sublime poetic form, in such a theological conception as that of Christ the Son of God, who makes atonement for the release of man from sin. In this case the incarnation is spiritual rather than merely physical in nature, since it is the soul and not the body with which God is concerned. But in its whole setup, the flesh appears as the garment, or costume, of God in the august drama of the redemption. God is present in human form to help man, to serve him, to save him. It is the spirit made flesh, that man, through God, may achieve his spiritual destiny.

IV

Thus does the divine process of deification, in things low and high, find its place in human annals. As an attempt to explain and interpret these historical personages who are men and yet seem to be more than men, deification, at least in its higher ranges of expression, has a character which is unique. It is God at work with man for the triumph of the spirit. But deification brings difficulties of its own, which cannot be neglected, or ignored. There is the basic question, for example, as to whether this process is real, and not a mere phantasm of the imagination. Why resort to this complex and confusing concept, which so easily drops into superstition, when there are other far simpler and more convincing explanations which should be given first and final examination before they are definitely laid aside? Human nature, for example! The obvious and common stuff of which we are made! The Psalmist, when he encounters man, hails him as only "a little lower than the angels," and crowns him "with glory and honor." Shakespeare, when he ponders him, exclaims "What a piece of work is a man! how noble in reason! how infinite in

faculty! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals!" An angel, yet still an animal! The container of all things beautiful, yet still a man. Is this not the essence of pure being, and, in the Lincolnian sense, all we need to explain the greatest and noblest of humankind? Man's own inner life, the substance of his extraordinary yet normal experience, this is the golden key which unlocks the heart of mystery!

In one of the most familiar of William James's unforgettable essays, the great psychologist declares that in each one of us there are reserves of energy which are seldom if ever used. Deep down within the soul are these quickening powers, unfathomable springs of being, which lie untouched. They are like the reserve regiments of an army which await, far in the rear, the progress of the battle, prepared to enter the fray, if disaster impends, and turn defeat into victory. So man has his emergencies, when he fights apparently in vain, and exhausts at last the resources which could save him. And all the while within him, standing ready to his call, are these reserves of energy, these latent powers of body, mind, and spirit, which need only to be summoned to dispel disaster, and leave man master of the field.

It is the discovery, control, and use of these reserve forces within us all which mark off the great and good from the masses of mankind. Most of us, as I have said, never call upon these reserves at all. We are not even aware that they are there. Only in some vast emergency, some strange and sudden hour of desperate need, are we awakened, as it were, to the presence of powers which seem not to be our own, so much greater are they than anything that we have known before. But we release

them and direct them, and straightway, like Tennyson's Sir Galahad, we find that

> [Our] strength is as the strength of ten.

Now the great men among us, the saviors of the race, as few in number as they are rare in spirit, know of these energies, and tap them not occasionally but all the time. While most of us, to change the figure, live contentedly on lower levels of thought and action, and only in grave crises of life and death seem able to lift ourselves to higher levels by calling to our need the operation of these hidden forces, the saints and saviors of mankind are living perpetually on these higher levels. Whereas most of us cannot even breathe in these lofty spaces, except in wonderful moments of self-discovery, these saints and seers and saviors have long since learned to make this celestial atmosphere their own, and have found it a quickening and sustaining influence in their lives. So quickening, so sustaining, that they seem no longer to be themselves, but rather a new and transcendent type of personality! They do things that seem miraculous. Surely some divine element has entered into them and taken possession of them! Some god is here at work! Nay, it must be God himself who has come to them, and lifted them beyond the bounds of human nature. But this resort to deification, as we have seen, is as unnecessary as it is fictitious. These saints and seers and prophets are still themselves. It is the normal and natural aspects of being which are at work within them. Only they have discovered farther and higher resources of power, have harnessed them to daily uses, and therewith have transmuted the human into the divine.

Another approach to this problem sheds light into dim and hidden places. Thus, there are few of us, who,

if we have any excellency within us, do not develop certain high qualities which are our own. We make them our own by our faithful practice of them to our own comfort and the reassurance of our world. We become, as it were, each one of us, a specialist in one particular area of virtue. We may perhaps excel in nothing else. Our good qualities may be lonely and feeble, and thus distinctive of nothing beyond ourselves. But here they are, the evidence of that modicum of goodness which is within us all, and the recompense of many a sin which might not otherwise be easily forgiven. One thinks of the famous passage in Lord Macaulay on King Charles I, who, when condemned for his betrayal of the liberties of the English people, was warmly defended for his fidelity to his wife and his devotion to his children.

It is this inequitable distribution of good and ill, this lapse here and weakness there, which is more or less characteristic of us all. There is bad in the best of us and good in the worst of us, as many a seer has said. Hence the careful yet urgent recommendation that we be slow in condemning one another. Which is only a revival of Jesus's injunction that we "judge not lest we be judged." But there are exceptions to every rule! In this case they are to be found in these great and good exemplars of the spirit, of whom Gandhi in our time is the supreme instance. These men, who constitute the unbroken line which stretches at long intervals from Lao-tse to the Mahatma, are remarkable not for any one quality, or group of qualities, as Marcus Aurelius for his constancy, or Tolstoi for his stalwart sacrifice, but rather for the whole gamut of human virtue. These saviors of mankind had not some, but all the virtues. They lapsed in nothing. Their lives to this day are a

complete and perfect pattern of all goodness. This explains why these lives of such transcendent glory seem to enter into moral categories that are apart from ours. Why also we are tempted, in a kind of rationalistic desperation, to interpret them by conceptions which are miraculous in character, and thus, from the theological as well as the historical point of view, fundamentally unreal and thus untrue.

What we need to know, and to remember, is this concept of complete and perfect virtue contained within the borders of a single life. Virtue within itself, untouched by any element of the miraculous, raised suddenly to the nth power of expression and accomplishment. What is sporadic and limited with us becomes "the perfect round" with them. One special quality of the good life, which we have labored so hard to attain, caught up and lost, so to speak, in that harmonic chord of music which constitutes the "grand Amen" of human living! So there remains no question here of the divine as set over against the human. No deification to challenge the natural and the normal! These saviors of the race, so few and yet so momentous in moral cause and consequence, are simply the men who possess every virtue of the good life. They are those among us who represent the supreme and final distillation of the spirit. If they are divine it is not because of anything they have been granted from without, but rather because of all they have achieved within. They have perchance made themselves one with God. But the impulse is human, and only the result divine.

Such is the answer to our question. How do these saviors appear, and with what virtue do they come? Not by "miracle and sign"! This is an interpretation of life which is more and more coming to be recognized

as sheer superstition. But simply and wonderfully do they come, like a flawless gem, a lovely blossom, or a breathless burst of music. They come "in the course of human events," that is all. There may be hidden powers deep down and within the soul, which reveal how God operates with men. But this is a part of that fundamental mystery which we cannot and perhaps need not know. Like Keats's realization of truth and beauty,

> . . . that is all
> Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

V

Thus do they arise and pass—these men who have come and gone, and taught us, "each in his own tongue," the way of life. Or rather these men who have appeared and, like the Himalayan peaks, have rooted themselves in the primeval depths of being, and pointed to the eternal stars.

The names of these men are sweet upon the tongue. When spoken they are like music—now a trumpet call to battle, more often a harmony of gentle sounds, soothing one's heart to rest and peace. Their words, as recorded or remembered by faithful disciples, have long since become the classic witness of all time. And scriptures without name, such as the Vedic Hymns, the Psalms, and passages of medieval lore and lessons, abide as testimonies of men's wisdom and high vision.

Does Gandhi belong in this august company? I have assumed so in this writing, and never has any disharmony disturbed my song of praise. Gandhi falls as naturally and easily into place as any of these saviors of ages gone. Indeed, if truth is to survive, it was high time that another appeared in this modern age, to keep intact

the spirit's sad but saintly succession. "God is not dead that he should speak no more." Thus says Lowell! But who was to bear the burden of the message? Gandhi, like Isaiah, in the hour of crisis, cried out, "Here am I, send me." But the Mahatma seemed to lack certain essential qualities. His presence was devoid of all physical glamour and beauty. His speech lacked eloquence and power. His pen was tireless, but not seldom uninspired. All too much of his activity was poured out, like water upon the ground, on economics and politics. But by every test of the spirit Gandhi proved himself the man. His very setting in a world of arms and hate and death seemed to prepare the way for his coming. He challenged this world, even as Jesus challenged Rome, to a duel between the sword and the spirit. In word and deed and drama, as in the case of assassination to parallel crucifixion, Gandhi met the issue. To his side he called Truth, and Love, and Peace. And as these were God, as the Mahatma knew God, the victory was his. As nations rise and fall, and civilizations disappear, the more wonderful becomes the survival of humanity. What can explain this more convincingly than the recurring visitations of the saviors who, in sole reliance upon the spirit, "make straight in the desert a highway for our God"?

Of these timeless saviors, Gandhi was one. I knew this when in 1921, to an incredulous public, I proclaimed Gandhi to be "the greatest man in the world." Through the more than thirty years of wars and rumors of wars that have passed since that date, I have never doubted this pronouncement.

Gandhi was not infallible. He made his mistakes, and on occasion said and did strange things. But his motives were always pure, his words and deeds dictated

by the noblest principles, and his spirit manifest of all those qualities of patience, humility, courage, and selfless sacrifice, which mark the few great sons of men. He organized and led a movement which was commensurate with his own unconquerable spirit. He died only to live more amply in the hearts of men. Therein lies his worth, and his eternal glory.

As for us, the happy few, who saw and knew and loved him, it is enough that we found the Truth, and have now the duty to impart it to other men.

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